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DISSUASIVE
AGAINST
ENTHUSIASM:

Wherein the
PRETENSIONS

OF THE
Modern Prophets

TO DIVINE INSPIRATION,
and the Power of Working MIRA-
CLES, are examin'd and confuted
by Scripture and Matter of Fact.

In a Letter to a Person of QUALITY:

*Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the
Spirits, whether they are of God: For many false
Prophets are gone out into the World, 1 John 1. 1.*

L O N D O N:

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1708.



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TIS not long, since you had some Remarks on the Pretences and Practices of a new Sect of Men lately risen among us, that give themselves out for Prophets, together with an earnest Request, you would satisfy your Friends, and the World, with the Reasons of your continuing to give Countenance and Support to a Pretension, that has not yet distinguished it self from a mere Delusion; Which, tho' it may have no effect upon the Judgments of strong and considerate Men, yet carries such Amusements, as are too apt to make Impression on some weak, tho' serious Minds. But that Paper being very short, and for that Reason less convincing; and the Answer you return'd, foreign to the purpose, have given me occasion of resuming the Argument, with hopes you'll pardon this fresh Trouble, when you have heard the Matter handled, now more at large, than cou'd be done in so narrow a Compass; which was then intended, these Papers having been drawn up some Months since, for your Use, but superseded by the coming out of a very seasonable Book, that contains great Variety of Observations and Reflections, collected and improv'd by the Pains and Zeal of a very ingenious and Learned Author; which I found rendred a considerable Part of my Labours less necessary; what prov'd to be so, was thought proper to be omitted. I have therefore here chose to shew

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the groundless Foundation these and the like Enthusiasts go upon, subjoining some few Reflections on their main Pretensions.

That we may proceed upon sure and known Principles, for the deciding of this Matter ; I propose only Two Rules.

One is the Holy Scripture, which as it contains the Revelations God at sundry Times made by uncontested Prophets and Apostles, must be allowed to be the best Rule, to try and judge of all other Revelations by : Whatever Doctrines or Practices are repugnant to This, or inconsistent with it, must be look'd upon as Spurious, and not possible to have come from the same Divine Spirit.

2. The other Rule, or Mark, to try and examine all new Doctrines, and inspired Teachers by is the Gift of Working Miracles ; under Miracles, I comprehend Prophecies. Where this Power clearly and unquestionably appears in favour of a Doctrine otherwise good and agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, its Testimony is not to be disputed ; because the Wisdom of God pitch'd upon This, and constantly made use of it, to give Credit to his Embassadors, whenever he sent them upon extraordinary Messages. All Missionaries then, who pretend to come in his Name, and by his immediate Authority, must produce these Credentials, to evince the Truth of their Divine Mission, before they can with reason expect, to find Reception in the World. * To the Law and to the Testimony ; if they speak not according to this Word, 'tis because there is no Light in hem.

'Tis true, before this Rule of Faith was finish'd, there was ^b a Faculty of discerning Spirits, whereby the first Christians were enabled to look into Men's Hearts. ^c By this St. Peter presently discern'd the fraudulent Intention of *Ananias* and *Saphira*; and seasonably ^d rebuk'd the more dangerous Design of *Simon Magus*, a pretended Christian, which had it past undiscovered, might have prov'd almost fatal to a rising Church. This Ability of searching the very Secrets of the Heart, and distinguishing Men's Pretensions, was very necessary in those Times, when a great many pretended to Inspiration, besides those who were divinely inspir'd.

But when the Scripture-Canon of the New Testament was once published, by which all Doctrines might thence-forward be examin'd: This among other Miraculous Gifts, ceas'd, as being of no farther Use.

1. The first Rule then I propose, for the trying and judging of all Revelations by, is the Holy Scripture, which contains the Revelations God at sundry Times made by uncontested Prophets and Apostles. This is a certain and adequate Rule, which wants no Supplement, neither need we any other, nor is there Ground to expect new Credentials to confirm this, or any other Discoveries to perfect it, it being already of it self, a sufficient Rule of Faith and Manners.

1. First, The Holy Scripture, contain'd in the Books of the *Old* and *New-Testaments*, is a certain, infallible Rule; because it was deliver'd by him, who can no more deceive others, than be deceived himself. It is therefore call'd *the Word of God* because, he spake it by the Mouth of Man.

^b 1 Cor. 12. 10. ^c Acts. 5. 3. ^d Ch. 8. 19.

and because, it imports those things which God was pleas'd to make known to the World, as necessary to be known, and practis'd in order to Eternal Life.

That what bears this Character, was undoubtedly reveal'd by God, is evident by the miraculous Works which accompanied the first Delivery of it: The Attestation of so many Miracles being not to be question'd: For 'tis not reasonable to imagin, that the Almighty should so visibly interpose and engage his Authority for the Reputation of a Doctrin, and the Publishers of it, and not to have reveal'd that Doctrin to them which they preach'd, and He by his Power confirm'd as his.

And this Testimony of Miracles was not given in Corners, but in publick View, before Thousands of Spectators, before those that were Enemies, as well as those who were Friends to the Cause; and is recorded in as credible Histories, as any the World can afford; Because they were written, some by Christians, some by irreconcilable Enemies to Christianity. What further Evidence then can such a Doctrin want, which is thus attested by Divine Authority? What Reason can be alledged, why we shou'd still expect, that God should exert his Power, either by Miracles, or by a Spirit of Prophecy in the present Age, to convince Mankind, that this is the Doctrin which was once for all deliver'd unto the Saints? For, when we have once sufficient Grounds to believe a thing, there remains ever after an Obligation upon us to believe the same, without repeated Proofs of it.

But it is said, How can we be sure, these Books, which are called the Holy Scriptures, do contain that Divine Doctrin which was so reveal'd

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veal'd, deliver'd, and confirm'd, unless the same Spirit, which dictated it, discover this matter by some present Signs and Indications?

For this we have as much Assurance as the Nature of the thing is capable of, which is sufficient to satisfy the Enquiry of the Impartial. The matter here in Question, put by a very eminent Member of this new Society, I apprehend, is not whether the Prophets and Apostles of old writ certain Books, containing the Revelations which God made by them; for that is granted on all Hands, but whether the Books now extant, that bear their Names, and receiv'd by the Christian Church for the Rule of Faith, be those very Books, which were so written?

That these are no other, we have a two-fold Evidence; the one extrinsical, such as credible Testimony; the other, intrinsical, which is the matter contain'd in these Books, which has upon it the Characters of Divine Revelation. These Two are as sufficient Grounds and Motives of Credibility, as can be expected or desired in any thing convey'd to us from so remote a Distance.

First, As for the External Evidence of the Genuine Authority of these Books, we have an uninterrupted Series of Testimonies, brought down all along from the first Years, near the Times they were respectively written in, till this very Day, to prove, that these two Volumes of Scripture, consisting of two Testaments, are the very same with those Originals which the Inspired Persons whose Names they bear, wrote. For the proving that each of these Volumes is genuine, we need not have recourse to distinct Testimonies, tho' they were delivered to the World at different Times: Because they are in themselves like a pair of Indentures, which by mutual Evidence justify

justify each other ; so that one of them can't be forg'd or false, unless the other be so too ; and consequently, if either of them be prov'd by Articles, the other is fully assur'd by the same means, though it had no Evidence peculiar to it.

Thus, for Instance, the *Old Testament* foretells many Ages before, what Things should come to pass many Ages after ; accordingly, the *New Testament* contains a Relation of such Events, as aptly and fully answer to these Predictions. In the one there is, as it were, a History of Christ before his Appearance, which exactly agrees with the Description and Character given of him in the other, insomuch that we are thence able to prove, that he is the Messiah. And for a further Proof, our Saviour and the Apostles, the Authors and Penmen of the Last Testament, quote the Scriptures of the First, as Books of Divine Authority ; and appeal to them upon all Occasions, in Justification of the Doctrine which they taught. So that the Genuin Authority of the *Old Testament*, very much depends upon, and is sufficiently confirm'd by the Testimony of the New. I shall therefore content my self with the Proof of the Latter.

First, soon after the Gospel was revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit, which their Master had promised to send,^e to bring all Things he had said, to their Remembrance, and they had communicated it to others, by their Preaching ; it was by them carefully committed to Writing, of which Writings, to prevent all Mistakes and Miscarriage, either of their being ~~lost~~, interpolated, or

^e John 14. 26.

otherwise corrupted, several Copies were taken, and occasionally sent into all Parts of the World, as the Gospel was planted, and so publish'd as soon as written, and then handed to the next Age : Which are now convey'd down to us by the general and uncontrouled Testimony of all the Succeeding Ages : And amidst the great Variety, or various Readings of these Copies, that were so dispers'd, when collated together, we find no material Differences, making reasonable Allowance for small Oversights and ordinary Errors, incident, and almost unavoidable to the most faithful, accurate Transcribers : On which Account no Author suffers in his Reputation among judicious Readers : The Authority of which Copies was never question'd in that Age, wherein the Doctrine and Miracles recorded in them, were first publish'd, nor could ever since be invalidated by all the most subtle Opposers of our Holy Faith, who in their respective Writings against it, look'd upon these Scriptures, as the genuine Records and Standard of the Christian Doctrine, and therefore us'd their utmost Endeavours to extort them out of the Hands of the Christians, and destroy them out of the World, thinking by that means to abolish and extinguish Christianity it self. But notwithstanding all Attempts against them, they are by a peculiar Providence preserv'd entire to this Day, having now stood the Test of near 1700 Years, as the *Old Testament*, in whole, or in part, has stood above 3000, so long 'tis since the time of *Moses* ; and they both give the most rational and impartial Account of Things, above any antient Records that the World can produce.

Secondly,

Secondly, Another Proof of the Genuineness of these Scriptures, is the subject matter contained in them, which has upon it the Characters of a Divine Revelation, and is very different from Human Composition.

For here is a Vein of Matter, as it were, running through the whole Body of them, as is worthy of God, and becoming him to speak, dictate and do, in a Revelation from him; and as is fitting for the Advantage, Satisfaction, and Happiness of Mankind, in a Revelation made to them.

Where we find the most lively Description of the Divine Perfections; the Wisdom, Power, Justice, Mercy, and Goodness of Almighty God; and the most perfect Representation of our Duty and Engagements to him; together with the most powerful Enforcements that can be expected from Revelation.

The Divine Nature and Will, the present and future State of Mankind, the Providence that governs the World, and the Rewards of another, are set forth in the liveliest Characters. Here the whole Scene of Providence is laid open, and display'd the Creation of the World, the Fall of Man, and God's Reconciliation to him by the Death of his Son, a Thing knowable only by Revelation. We have here a System of the best Principles worthy of the Divine Perfections; and a Scheme of the best Rules of Morality, enforced with the highest Encouragements, and most cogent Arguments: Which, like the Book of Nature, the more it's view'd and consulted, the more do the lively Characters of a Divine Hand and Wisdom appear in the Composure.

So that if ever there was a Revelation, this Book of Scripture does contain it.

This Evidence is further corroborated by the peculiar way, in which these Scriptures are written; which have, tho' not the Excellency of Human Speech or of Human Wisdom, yet such a Majesty and Authority, shining through the whole, as gives them a Lustre as much beyond the Modern Prophecies, or indeed more Rational Compositions, as the Bodies of Angels which they assum'd for some special Service, excell'd those of a Mortal Nature.

They may indeed want the artful Advantage of Humane Composition, the enticing words of Man's Wisdom, to which God has no more tyed himself than he ordinarily does to the Rules and Methods of Mankind in governing the World; but the less there is of Art, the more there is of Wisdom; the less of Man, the more of God in the Composure; which shews it can have none for its Author and Indicter but Him; wherein he has expressed an unimitable Hand by the great variety of Style he has made use of, by different Instruments to suit the different Tempers and Capacities of Mankind. How admirably does the Poetical Vein of *David*, the Oratory of *Isaiah*, the more Rustick Way of *Amos*, the Elegancy of *St. Luke*, the Plainness of *St. Peter*, the Profoundness of *St. Paul*, serve the Common Design of instructing Men in the Knowledge of God and their Duty to him? Tho' all the Parts of this Scripture are not equally alike, but like the inspired Writers themselves, of whom some were bred up in the Nurseries of Learning, and others fetched from the Fishery and Sheepfold; yet as they are plain in the same Essential Doctrine, so the Style and Order of their Words, if we

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were throughly acquainted with the Customs and Usages of those Ages and Countries they were written in, would be very surprizing in Point of Propriety, Elegance and Use, if we may judge of what we do not know, by what we do.

How admirable is our Saviour's last ^a Discourse to his Disciples; and that of St. Paul about a ^b Future State, and the Resurrection to it; or the close and sensible ^c Reasonings of the Author to the *Hebrews*?

That is but a trifling Objection which a late Writer makes against the Scripture, saying, ^d that God doth not Reason, but Command. For when God speaks to Men, he often condescends to teach them after the manner of Men; and therefore as he does sometimes require absolute Obedience to his Commands, so at other times he is pleas'd to shew them the Equity, and the Reasonableness of them, both equally becoming the Divine Majesty, and which are a glorious Instance of the Divine Wisdom conspicuous in the whole; and also adds both to the Excellency and the Usefulness of this Scripture, and advances it in both above any Book whatsoever.

To which as the more sure Word of Prophecy we do well to give heed: For so long as we Walk by this Rule we can't possibly Err. Because,

2. *Secondly*, These Scriptures are an adequate and perfect Rule and Measure of all Christian Doctrines, which wants neither unwritten Traditional Doctrines, nor any Additional Discoveries of the Divine Mind to compleat it: Nor do we read of any other Rule in use in the

^a Job. 14. ^b 1 Corin. 15. ^c See Ep. to the Heb. & Theol. Polit. c. 8
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Catholick Church for many hundred Years, till Popish Inventions introduced in that Communion, Another, to support their Novel Doctrines of Invocation, Purgatory, &c. Not Warrantable by This. Wherefore they urge the Necessity of joining to the written Word, some Oral Traditions, pretended to be receiv'd from the Fathers, to make up a Compleat Rule. A thing so very absurd in it self as needs not much Argument to confute it.

For is it reasonable to suppose, that some Doctrines could not be committed to Writing as others were? Or that Scripture could not be a more certain way of conveying all Christian Doctrines from one Age to another, throughout all Generations, than Traditionary Reports, which are liable to infinite Mistakes, Uncertainties, and Falsifications? Of such Traditions, the Antient Fathers and Councils are entirely silent; and in their Discourses and Canons take notice of no other Rule, but the Scriptures, out of which they did constantly use to declare to the People what they were to believe, and what they were to practise. Which is hardly credible they would have done, if they had believed or thought that Scripture and unscriptural Traditions had been the Rule of Christian Faith.

But let the Scripture speak, and Vindicate it self against all the heavy Charges of imperfection. *These things, are written, says St. John, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have Life thro' his Name.* The Words plainly refer to the whole History of Christ's Life, Doctrin, and Miracles,

f John 20. 31. g Euseb.

written by the four Evangelists, which this Apostle, after he had supplied the Omissions which *St. Matthew, Mark and Luke* had made, and finish'd the whole, concludes thus; *These things were written to this End, that Men might believe and be saved.*

Now how could He in Reason say, that Men might be saved by believing these things, if these things be not sufficient to that end? Which certainly they are not, if any thing necessary to be believ'd in order to Salvation, be either left out, or not then revealed. This is farther apparent by what *St. Paul* tells *Timothy*, & *But continue thou in the things which thou hast Learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; ---and that the Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto Salvation through Faith which is in Christ Jesus; ---being profitable for Doctrin, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* If the Holy Scriptures be sufficient to these purposes; if they are able to make us wise unto Salvation, thro' Faith, and to perfect the Man of God in all good Works; What necessity is there of Oral Traditions, or of another Revelation? Can these carry us beyond Perfection? Or make us wise for any thing better than Salvation? If by believing and conforming our Lives to the Rules and Directions of Scripture, we may be perfected in all good Works and saved, 'tis enough.

A new Revelation upon the Neck of This, which every way thus Answers all necessary purposes, looks Redundant, like the Works of Su-

per-errogation in the Church of *Rome*, by which Men are said to do more, than what are necessary, or requir'd of them; a thing unbecoming us to ascribe to the Divine Wisdom, which tho' it be never wanting in what is necessary, yet does not use to do any thing that is Superfluous. And consequently we can't suppose, that God will break through the Laws of Nature to make another Revelation, (for a Revelation is a Miracle) when there is no occasion for it, nor necessity to require it; much less can we imagin, that he should break down an Establish'd Order of his own Appoinment, when there is as much reason for the continuance of it, as there was for the first Institution; and when it Answers all the Ends, for which a new Constitution can be framed, or a new Revelation made.

The Apostle Argues; if the first Covenant had been faultless, there should no place have been sought for the Second: And if there be a place for a Third, there must be some Fault or Imperfection chargeable upon the Second. But from that it is entirely free: And also is so perfect, that there is no need of another Covenant or Gospel Revelation. For

First, There can't be a more noble and useful Subject for a Revelation, than that of the Gospel, which is concerning God's Reconciliation to Mankind, and their Redemption by the Death of his Son. And where this is plainly reveal'd, there is no place for a Second, nor any need of any further Revelation. And,

2. If we consider this Revelation as a Covenant, consisting of Promises and Conditions enforc'd by Solemn Menaces, there can't be more

excellent and beneficial than the First, and more necessary than the Second, nor more terrible than the Sanction.

For, what can be propos'd of greater Advantage to Mankind than the Favour of God, the Blessing and Protection of his Providence, the Assistance of his Spirit, and in the close of all, Everlasting Life of Happiness in Heaven, which the Gospel promises to those that believe and obey it, or upon failure of the latter, Repent; which are the Conditions.

And what Conditions less than Faith and Obedience, or Repentance can deserve so great a Reward? These Conditions are as immutable in their Nature as the Promises; both being declar'd by, and depending upon, God's Veracity and Faithfulness.

And as for the Sanction of Divine Menaces which give the greater weight and force to these Terms; what can be so Solemn, so Emphatical as the Terrors of the Lord, threatned in Scripture against such as will not comply with them? For the Terrors of the Divine Judgments are great beyond all Imaginations, which are already denounc'd and continually impending over the Heads of impenitent Sinners, who if they don't feel them presently Executed, have all imaginable Reason to look upon themselves, as only repriev'd, not pardon'd; the Execution being only respited. And therefore to awake Offenders to Repentance, that thereby those Judgments may be averted, there needs no new Prophetical Warnings; the Warnings of Scripture are sufficient: If Men hear not These, neither will they

in all probability, be perswaded by any other; tho' even a Messenger came from the Dead, to deliver them.

As for the Extent also of this Law, or new Covenant, as to Time and Place, none can exceed it in those respects. For 'tis not like the Law of *Moses* containing Types and mutable Terms, Accommodated and Limited to one Nation, but 'tis an everlasting Covenant, comprehending all Nations and Ages under Heaven: Neither does it's Authority want the Confirmation of new Miracles.

3. *Thirdly*, The Perfection of these Scriptures, which contain all things necessary or proper for us to know, or that perhaps we are capable of knowing in this imperfect and probationary State, Argues them to be the most consummate and last Revelation we are to expect before the End of the World, till our Faith is turn'd into Vision, and Hope into Enjoyment of the Glorious Presence of the Divine Majesty. I know of no Grounds any Man has to look for another. For the Gospel-Revelation, which has brought Life and Immortality to Light, seems to us to be the last Part; Because it was deliver'd by the Son of God in Human Nature, who was the last that was promis'd to come from Heaven on this Message; whose Coming immediately from the Bosom of the Father, and being most intimate to the Divine Mind, and Conscious of the whole Mystery of Godliness, as he himself was essentially God Blessed for ever, and consequently of infinite Knowledge, must qualify Him the best of any Person, that ever was or shall come in the World, to make the most perfect and ultimate Discovery and Declaration of God's Mind and Will to Mankind.

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And therefore what he hath reveal'd and declar'd as the Mind of God, can stand in no want of any Supplement-Revelation, either to explain or enlarge it.

To obviate all manner of expectation of that kind, that Men might raise to themselves concerning another Revelation, the Scripture shuts up all with this Revelation as clearly appears from that to the *Hebrews*; *God who at Sundry times and in diverse manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son.* Which implies that there was a gradual Progression in Revelation from time to time, from a lower to a higher Degree; but the honour of all was reserv'd to the Son of God, to whom the Prophets were Harbingers, and the Angels themselves Ministers. For, this is the Foundation and Scope of the Apostles Argument; *God who at Sundry times, &c. hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all Things, being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they; for unto which of the Angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, &c.*

Now as the Son is the last that appears, so beyond this Revelation there can't be supposed to be any other, because his Revelation must be like himself, perfect and compleat, discovering all things that are necessary to be known, or Mankind capable of knowing in this present State; as we say, it does. Let them who contend for a new Revelation, shew wherein this is deficient, or what point of Doctrine necessary to Salvation is knowable more, than what is herein reveal'd: We think we can't ascend higher in our Notions and Conceptions of things, than we are here.

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Taught. We can't exceed its Rules in our Practice, nor be defective in any part of Duty: if we consult and observe it: Nor can we desire more excellent Encouragements, than are herein propos'd. For, tho' the Law of Nature, or of *Moses* made nothing perfect, yet the bringing in of a better Hope by the Gospel, did. So that, we have nothing further to expect, no more another Revelation, than another Messiah; no more, than another God to reward us, and another Heaven to reward us with.

But it may be said, 'that tho' we can see no Reason, why, after the full Revelation of the Everlasting Gospel, by our Saviour and the Apostles, there should be any new Revelations given, yet many Things may be requisite, or necessary for some wise and great Purposes, which, we not knowing the Counsels and Designs of Providence, may not see any reason for. For God's Thoughts are not always as our Thoughts.

The Dispensations of Providence, 'tis true, are not to be measur'd by our narrow Scantlings: Nor is any finite Understanding capable of penetrating into the Mysteries of his Secret Counsels and Designs, they being past Man's finding out. But Things reveal'd, as they belong to us to know, so are we obliged to believe, and keep stedfast to, without giving way to large Hypotheses or new Expectations, where he has given us no Grounds for them. We are sure, that God has reveal'd all that he had promised to reveal, or that is requisite for us to know; because his Word in Scripture, by which we are to be determin'd, tells us so. And 'tis our indispensable Duty to take his Word for it.

But to suppose, that there may be many things not yet reveal'd, necessary to be reveal'd for wise

and great Purposes, seems to allow too great a Latitude for the Workings of Imagination, which under Pretence of revealing many necessary and useful Things, has often put upon Mankind, and made some believe themselves moved and acted by the Spirit of God, when afterwards it has been evident, it was nothing but a Delusion.

God did indeed by this Prophet, tell the *Jews*, who were a People of very low and narrow Conception, under that imperfect Revelation; that their Thoughts concerning his gracious Dispensation under the Gospel, were not as his Thoughts: Which Thoughts of his are since sufficiently declar'd and made known by the Gospel, to all who believe and enjoy that Light; which does not give the least hint, that he has any Thoughts in reserve, to be imparted to us at any time hereafter. And tho' he did at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, speak in times past unto the Fathers, by the Prophets, according to the Exigencies of those Times, to supply the Deficiencies of that glimmering and imperfect Light, and to remind the World of the coming of the *Messiah*, so long as was necessary for that purpose, till the time of *Malachi*, the last of the Prophets; and then there was an Intermission of Prophecies for about Four Hundred Years, to *John the Baptist*: Yet since he has spoken to us by his Son, and gave by him so full a Declaration of his Will, there is not the like Reason, that he should speak to us any more in so extraordinary a manner,

And therefore, as 'tis no wonder, that Prophecy should close up at the Death of *Malachi*, because one of the prime Ends of it did then cease, which was to be a Seal and an Assurance of the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Volumes; the

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Canon of the *Old-Testament* at that time being
 consigned and compleated by *Ezra*, with the Affi-
 stance of *Malachi*, and others of the last Pro-
 phets, God did not think good any longer to con-
 tinue the Propheerick Spirit among them. So, for
 the Reasons before given, 'tis as little to be won-
 dered at, that the Divine and Miraculous Gift of
 Inspiration, should cease in the Christian Church,
 when the Scripture Canon of the *New Testament*
 was perfected, which was done by *St. John* the
 Divine, in his Book of Propheerick Letters to the
 Seven Churches of *Asia*,^(z) concerning things which
 were then shortly to come to pass, as he tells them
 in the Preface.

For, no doubt, but those Churches, to which
 he wrote this Revelation, had by that time the rest
 of the Apostles Writings in their Hands. 'Tis not
 consistent with the Zeal of those Early Times of
 Christianity, nor with the very Design and Rea-
 son of the Apostolick Writings, to suppose, as some
 Learned Men do, that the present Scripture-Ca-
 non should lay concealed in the Coffers of parti-
 cular Churches, or of private Men, to whom
 they were written, and should be unknown to other
 Churches, till about 130 Years after Christ. For,
 the Four Gospels, Acts, and general Epistles, were
 written to all Churches and Persons throughout
 the World; and as they were written to be pub-
 lished, so doubtless they were publish'd so soon as
 written: The like might be said of the Epistles
 written to particular Churches and Persons,
 which so soon as they had receiv'd, they according
 to their known Zeal, must have communicated
 them to others, or Copies of them were com-
 municated by the Authors themselves: So

(z) Rev. i. 1.

that no Church could be ignorant of the published Books of their Religion, that were thus communicated to them. Therefore *Ensebius* tells us, (a) That when *John* the Apostle wrote his Gospel, the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, were in all Mens Hands: And (b) *St. Peter* intimates, that the Epistles of *St. Paul*, which is another considerable Part of the Canon of the *New-Testament*, were commonly read, tho' a very bad use was made of them by some: And without Question, the rest of the Apostolick Letters were likewise publish'd.

I say therefore, that the Scripture-Canon was compleated by *St. John the Divine*, when he wrote his Revelation, which he seals up with this Sanction, that perhaps, as is most proper, was intended to be applied to the whole Volume of the *New-Testament*; (c) *I testify unto every Man that heareth the Words of the Prophecy of this Book, If any Man shall add unto these Things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book.*

But 'tis further argued, that part of this Revelation, which was written by some other of the Apostles, besides what we now have, was lost; and therefore a New Revelation is thought seasonable and necessary to supply that Loss.

I answer, whether there were any more Books written by the Apostles, than those now in our Hands, is a Question which we are inclin'd to determine in the Negative; because, if there had been such, we do with reason think, that the same Providence of God, and the same Care of the Church, which has preserv'd These, would doubtless have preserv'd them also, especially, if they contain'd any Doctrine besides what is contain'd in These. But supposing there were other

(a) *Enseb. M. E. l. 3. c. 14.* (b) *2 Pet. 3. 15.* (c) *Rev. 22. 18.*

Gospels and Epistles, written by some of the Apostles, (as 'tis reported) which are now lost, yet we believe that they contained only the same Doctrine for Substance, the same Form of Sound Words, differing only in the Expression that these do; because the Apostles were all taught alike by the same Master, Christ; and were enlightened by the same Holy Ghost; and consequently could relate but the same Things. Nay, put the case as far as it will bear, that several Pieces of these Apostles Writings (some of whose Books are still extant) miscarried, yet even that will not prove the necessity of another Revelation. For, the Books that remain, are sufficient; I mean, all of them taken together, as is Self-evident; Because they contain a repeated Abrogation of the *Mosaic Law*, so far as 'tis Ritual and Judicial; a Compleat System of Principles and Morals; the History of the Parentage, Conception, Birth, Miracles, Doctrine, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Saviour: The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles; their Divine Inspiration, and Miraculous Powers, their Epistles to private Persons, to Churches and Nations; in which they often professedly repeat the Substance of the Christian Religion, as well in what respects Faith, as Manners. In short, a Man can't read these Books, without most plainly perceiving, that they are such an Account of the Religion they teach, as needs no Supplement. And if so, we may then as well expect a new Religion, as another Revelation.

When therefore this Revelation was completed by the Hands of the Apostles, the Spirit of Revelation withdrew; and in that particular, has been silent about 1600 Years. There have not been wanting some, I should have said a great

great many since, almost in every Age, who have pretended to the same Spirit; some for matter of Prayer and Preaching; and some have flown higher, fancying, that there was a more perfect Dispensation to ensue, as the Modern Prophets seem to insinuate, than what is contain'd in the Gospel. Of this Opinion, were the Montanists of Old; and the Abbot *Joachim* since, whose Gospel was (d) publish'd by the Mendicant Friars, about Four Hundred and Fifty Years ago, which was called the Everlasting Gospel; it unaccountably took and spread it self in *Germany*, *Spain*, and *Italy*; and the Professors of it continued for a long Season. The like Revelations and Visions, the Famous Quietist, *Molinos*, at *Rome*, and his Followers, have of latter Years been pushing on the World; but for want of Proof to support them, they are all expiring again, like an *Ignis Fatuus*.

Of the same Nature, the Pretensions of these *French* Missionaries, and their Disciples, seem to be: Let us examine them by the standing Rule of Holy Writ, bringing these new Revelations to that Test; I doubt not, but we shall find them, to have sent themselves; and their Pretences no other than the Inventions of Men, or the Delusions of Satan: And therefore, by all means, to be rejected, as destructive of true Christianity, and consequently condemned by that (e) severe, but just Sentence of the Apostle; *Though we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you; than that which we have already preach'd unto you, let him be accursed, &c.*

That the Doctrine which these Men advance, is another Gospel from that which is written, a

(d) *Math. Paris Hist.* Anno Dom. 1255. (e) *Gal. 1. 8.*

slight Observation will discover. Out of a great many, I shall only instance in few Particulars:

I. Their Pretension to extraordinary Inspirations, which they seem to make an Article necessary to be receiv'd by all the Faithful, in order to Salvation, because, as they say, whoever opposes this Pretension, how Righteous soever in other Respects, shall be destroy'd for want of Faith, with the wicked World; is a new Doctrine, dissonant from the Scripture, and consequently is another Gospel: Because it alters the Rule of Faith, establish'd in Scripture, by adding a new Article to it. For, by another Gospel, the Apostle means somewhat that is added to it, and with it made necessary to Salvation; as it was when the Observation of the *Mosaic* Law was by some insisted on, as Obligatory to Christians, as ever it had been to the *Jews*. But that Observation was charg'd and condemned as another Gospel.

And by Parity of Reason, we must conclude, that whatever alters the Terms and Conditions of the Gospel; and makes that necessary to Salvation, which the Gospel hath not made so, is such a perverting of the Gospel, as makes it quite another Thing: For, that is to set up That, as a Revelation, which hath no Foundation in Scripture, nor Divine Authority to confirm it: And such is this new Article of extraordinary Inspirations: For, there is no Precedent, either of Promise, or Example, that we can find, of any such thing, as extraordinary Inspirations to be given to all the Faithful, as a Sign of State of Grace and necessary Qualification for Happiness. When extraordinary Gifts of Prophecy did most abound in the Church, all the Faithful had them not, nor had they any Promise to encourage them in any such Expectation.

God

God indeed had promised in (f) *Joel*, that in the Days of the Messiah, he would pour out his Spirit upon all Flesh: But that Promise, though it runs in general Terms, yet must be understood in a restrained Sense, as the like Expressions in Scripture often are. As the Phrase, *all Flesh*, must be restrain'd to all Men, they only being capable of Spiritual Gifts; so must likewise all Men be here restrain'd to some of all Ranks of Men; as when *Hazael* is said to bring to the Prophet *Elisha*, (g) *All the Goods of Damascus*, that is, some of every good thing. So our Saviour (h) healed all kinds of Diseases, that is, some of every kind. The Promise then of an extraordinary Effusion, includes only all sorts of Men, without Exclusion of Age, Sex, Conditions, or Nation. And so the Promise was fulfil'd in the Days of the Apostles, according to this limited Sense, when it was most likely, there should be a general Effusion of the Spirit upon every individual Person, if ever any such had been intended by the Promise: But as there was no time before those Days, in which this Promise was fully made good, so are we not to expect any After-times, for the Completion of it.

But, the New Prophets expect it, according to the Interpretation they put upon *Joel's* Prophecy, which, as they would persuade themselves, is now fulfilling, when all Mankind, from the least to the greatest, shall be taught immediately by the Spirit of God: † The first Fruits whereof, in the Apostle's Days, as they suppose, implies rather than excludes such a Harvest, and the Judg-

(f) *Joel* 2. 2. 28, &c. (g) 2 *Kings* 8. 9. (h) *Lacy's Preface to his Proph. Warn. part I. page 12.*

ment that attend this Prophecy, not concurring with that Juncture, do shew that the Accomplishment thereof on the Day of *Pentecost*, or in the Apostolical Age, did not terminate.

But, 1st, let us hear the Prophecy it self out; and the Exposition of it, from a more infallible Spirit. *And it shall come pass in the last Days, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall Prophecy, your old Men shall dream Dreams, your Young Men shall see Visions. And also upon the Servants, and upon the Handmaids, will I pour out my Spirit, &c.* By these Days is not meant all the Days of Christianity; but only the Days of the Apostles, when such Revelations were common. For, in those same Days, as it follows in that Prophet, *I will shew Wonders in the Heavens, and in the Earth, Blood and Fire, and Pillars of Smoak. The Sun shall be turned into Darknes, and the Moon into Blood, before the terrible Day of the Lord come;* that is, before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and Dissolution of the Temple, according to our Saviour's Interpretation of this Passage. (a) All which Signs and Judgments fell out before the Death of *St. John*, and the end of that Generation of People, as our Lord foretold.

That this Prophecy did immediately relate to those Times, and was then punctually accomplish'd, is farther evident, by what the Prophet and our Saviour says, concerning the Deliverance which the Jewish Christians should meet with, from that sad Calamity. *And it shall come to pass, says Joel, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord, that is, Christ, shall be deliver'd from*

a See *Iosaphus de bello Jud.* l. 7.

that direful Judgment; for in Mount Sion, and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, that is, of the Jews, that believe, and in the Remnant whom the Lord shall call to Christianity.

How this Prophecy was, by a special Dispensation made good to the Christians at Jerusalem, is very obvious, as well as wonderful to observe. (b) When Cestus Gallus took the upper City, and then on the sudden, without any visible Cause, raised the Siege; the Christians taking Warning by this and other Signs, presently deserted the Place, retiring according to our Lord's Premonition into the Mountains of Pella in Perea. So that when some Months after, another Roman General came to renew that fatal Siege, there was not one Christian remaining in the City, in whose Ruins, eleven hundred Thousand Jews were buried. This Calamity might well be called the terrible Day of the Lord; when He exercised so severe a Judgment on his Enemies, and such distinguishing Mercy to his Servants.

(c) And after the Tribulation of those Days, says our Saviour, he shall send his Angels with the great Sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from one end of Heaven to the other, *καὶ τότε ἀποστέλει τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ σάλπιγγος φωνῆς μεγάλης*, that is, And then immediately after that Tribulation, will he send forth his Messengers or Ministers, stiled, (d) *οἱ ἀγγελοὶ αὐτοῦ*, with the Trumpet or Voice of the Gospel, by the preaching of which they shall gather together his Elect, that is, Christians from among the Gentiles over all the World. This was presently to follow the Tribulation of those

(b) Euseb. H. E. l. 3. c. 5. (c) Matth. 24. 31. (d) 2 Chron. 36. 15.

Days. Before this time, the Apostles were sent only (e) to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel; to whom the Promise and Offer of Reconciliation was first made; and forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles. But now upon the Jews rejecting that gracious Overture, they are cast off, and the Gentiles are called in, whose coming is represented, as hastening from the four Winds, agreeably to our Saviour's Prediction; (f) *Many shall come from the East, and from the West, from the North and from the South, and shall sit down in my Kingdom; and the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast into utter Darkness.* This was to be compleated in that Age; *Verily I say unto you,* says our Saviour, *This Generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled.* The Phrase, *in yavix aurn* This Age or Generation shall not pass away, demonstrates, that what he had hitherto mention'd, was to come to pass, not at the final Conversion of the Jews, or Day of Judgment, but in that very Age, whilst some of that Generation of Men were living, as the (g) Words clearly import, and are never taken in any other Sense in the *New Testament.*

As the Judgment was to take place in that Age; so the extraordinary Effusion of the Spirit foretold by the Prophet, was then fulfill'd, as St. Peter says, when the Holy Ghost, at the famous Time of Pentecost, descended upon the Disciples. This which is come to pass (says he)

(e) *Matth. 10. 5, 6.* (f) *Luke 13. 28, 29.* (g) *Matth. 11. 16. and ch. 12. 42, 45. Mark 8- 12. Luke 7. 31. ch. 11. 29, and ch. 16. 8. and ch. 21. 32. Act. 2. 40.*

is the Completion of that which is spoken of by the Prophet *Joel*, in these Words, *It shall come to pass in the last Days, I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh* (that is, Persons of all Ranks) *and your Sons and your Daughters shall Prophecy, &c.* And for the Terror and Condemnation of such, as would not be convinc'd by this and other Miracles, the Apostle repeats *Joel's* and our Saviour's Prodigies, which boded the sad Calamities that were to ensue, and the utter Dissolution of the *Jewish* Government, which seems to be meant by *the Sun's being turned into Darkness, and the Moon into Blood.* And then he tells them of that Remarkable Deliverance which God would work, for those that believed, in the Time of this general Distress and Ruin; *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord, shall be saved.* From these Premises we infer, that *Joel's* Prophecy of Inspiration does not remain now to be fulfill'd, but, as *Joel* foretold, and St. Peter declar'd, is long since accomplish'd.

It's therefore incumbent on them, who wou'd have the Completion of it extended to these Times, to prove it, if they can, from other Places of Scripture.

How obvious soever they may imagine the matter lies before them, 'twill not perhaps be so easie a Task to shew, that the Phrase of the last Days is to be extended beyond the first Century, or the Age of the Apostles. For, according to the common Sentiments of most Learned Interpreters, the last Days refer and belong only to the Beginnings of Christianity, and signifie the last Times of the *Jewish* State, concurring with the Times of the *Messiah*, and the erecting of his Kingdom, by calling the Gentiles, and

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settling a Christian Church to succeed that of the Jews, and is called (h) *Συγγένεια τῶν αἰώνων* the End or Conclusion of the Ages, the very Time of Christ's Personal Appearance on Earth. For where-ever the Apostles speak of the last Days, or last Times, whether with Relation to Christianity, or Apostacy from it, 'tis as being then actually come, and shortly after to be concluded. Besides what has been already urg'd from the Prophet Joel and St. Peter's Interpretation of him: There are other Circumstances concurring, to point out that Time to be the last Days aforesaid. 'Tis said, that in these last Days, God hath spoken unto us by his Son; which was then actually, and literally done; and that in the last Time, *there should be Mockers, walking after their own Lusts*; and that they were then come, is evident from the following Words, (i) *These are they who separate themselves.* (k) *Little Children, 'tis now the last Hour, and as you have heard that Antichrist shall then come, so now are many Antichrists, whereby you may know that this is the last Hour.* Again, (l) *This know, that in the last Days, there shall be perilous Times, for Men shall be Lovers of themselves*; and that those Times or Days, and Persons, were then come, is evident from his Exhortation (m) *to turn away from them*, and his Character of them, (n) *Of these are they that creep into Widow's Houses*: And that the last Times here mention'd, were already come, we learn from his Admonition to Timothy, *to put the Brethren in Mind of these Things*. Here is a Nar-

(h) Heb. 9. 26. (i) Jude 17. 19. (k) 1 John 2. 18. ἡμεῖς
 ἐκ ἐστίν. (l) 2 Tim. 3. 1, 2. (m) Ver. 5. Ver. 6. (n) Ver. 4.

rative of what the Spirit had foretold should happen in the last Days, of the *Jewish* State, which was the first Age of Christianity, both by the general and plentiful Effusion of the Holy Ghost, and by an Apostacy from the Faith: And they all falling in with the Times then present, declare and determine those to be the Days appropriated for the fulfilling of those Predictions, which in a peculiar manner are distinctly answered by the Occurrences and Character of those Times.

But if, with others, we should grant, that by the last Days, is meant all the Space of Time, from Christ's first, to his second Appearance. Yet this will make nothing for this latter Dispensation: For, as the last Days hold in this larger Acceptation, so long the Revelation of the Gospel is to continue, without any Alteration, as appears, not only from the Nature and Perfection of it, but also from what the Apostle argues, As (o) *it is appointed unto Men once to die* (says he) *but after this to Judgment*: So Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second Time, without Sin-Offering, unto Salvation. That is, As there is no Alteration in the State of Men, from Death unto Judgment, but as they die, so they will appear at Judgment: So there is no Alteration to be between Christ's first appearing, when he offered himself; and his second, when he shall come in like manner, as he was seen to go into Heaven.

(o) *Heb. 9. 27, 28.*

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If there is to be any Alteration, as to this Revelation, it is not to be before, but must be after our Saviour's second Appearance. But of that we have nothing to say.

In Opposition to the Office of Authoriz'd Pastors and Teachers, the Spirit, by the Mouth of Mr. Lacy, tells his Followers, (p) *He will arm them with Arguments, that they may be able to give a Rational Account of their Hope in him, and then applies to them part of God's Promise to the Christian Church: The Scripture, says he, you will find more at large, of teaching every one himself, and not another, even from the least to the greatest; and Servants and Handmaids, and young Children, distinct from grown Persons; that these should receive the Promises of the Spirit abundantly, not in the common way of Communication.*

There is nothing so fair, as to give the Holy Scripture Liberty to speak out its own Sense, without being interrupted; by that means we shall best come to understand it.

(q) *Behold, the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah. Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the Day that I took them by the Hand, to bring them out of the Land of Egypt, &c. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with them, I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and writethem in their Hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. And they shall teach no more every Man his Neighbour, saying, Know the Lord: For they shall*

(p) Lacy's Pro. War. part. 3. p. 17. (q) Jer. 31. 31, &c.

know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, &c. For I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more.

This very Promise in *Jeremiah*, is also in Words at length, cited and explained by the Apostle, (r) and applied to the Two Covenants: And he gives the *Hebrews* the Reason, why the Temporary Covenant of the Law made with the Fathers, is abolish'd, by the Introduction of the Eternal Covenant of the Gospel, of which Christ is the Mediator; by whose Sufferings 'twas confirm'd: And ever since that time, this Covenant has been in full Force and Authority. Will this Man's Spirit presume to charge the Divine Veracity and Goodness with Non-performance of his Promise to Christians, the Members of this Covenant, from the time it was first struct and establish'd with them, till now? Has the Christian Church for Sixteen or Seventeen Hundred Years, been left destitute, or kept in Suspence of those mighty Blessings which God promised it under the whole Dispensation of the Gospel, according to the Tenor of this Covenant?

Let's hear the Covenant it self, and the Explication of it by the infallible Rule of Scripture, which as 'tis the surest way to bring us to a right Understanding, so ought in all reason to determine this matter.

The Nature and Terms of this Covenant, are already handled, we have no occasion to consider it further, than the necessary Explication of the Words now before us, require. God graciously promises to enter into a New Covenant with the House of *Israel*, and of *Judah*, at the coming of the *Messiah*, not such as he had made with their

(r) *Heb. 8.*

Fathers, when he led them out of *Egypt*, which for the most part consisted of obscure Types and Shadows, of innumerable, costly, and burthensome Rites and Ceremonies, such as no Man could ever have discover'd, or in the least discerned himself obliged to observe and perform, unless he had been instructed, that they were commanded by a Divine Law-giver, and had the Observance of them frequently inculcated to him : But the Covenant God would now make with them, should spare them most of that Pains and Charge, and wherein they should not want much Teaching and Instruction : For, he would abolish those external, expensive Rituals, and put his *Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts* ; so that they should not have much occasion to teach every Man his Neighbour, to know the Lord, that is, the way to serve and Worship him ; for they all should know That, by the Law and Instruction written in their Hearts. Which by the Opposition here made between the two Covenants, plainly imports the Excellency of the Gospel above the Law ; that whereas, That was vail'd under Types and Shadows, This should be deliver'd with the greatest Perspicuity and Plainness of Words ; The Perspicuity and Suitableness of whose Precepts, in Comparison of the obscure and disagreeable Observances of the *Mosaick* Institution, should be so natural, familiar, easie, and every way accommodated to the Reasons and Understandings, to the Apprehensions and Tempers of Mankind, that every Man might easily, and without much searching, attain the Knowledge of them, and practise them : God would clearly and perspicuously make known his Will, being in the main nothing else but the Moral Law,

or the Law of Nature improv'd ; and by his Holy Spirit make such a deep Impression of it on their Spirits, and so continually bring it to their Remembrance, by their turning to the Gospel, that it should be as powerful, as if it were written on their Hearts. Not that all outward Teaching should by that means be rendred entirely useleſs, or ceaſe ; or that his Spirit ſhould repeat the ſame Revelation to Men, that thereby the Gospel alſo might become leſs uſeful. Not the firſt ; be-
 cauſe in the Law, Moſes taught God's Will, and expounded it unto the People, as did after him thoſe that ſat in Moſes's Chair, tho' it was then ſaid, (a) *The Commandment which I command thee this Day, is not hidden from thee ; the Word is near unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, and in thy Hands, that thou ſhouldeſt do it. See, I have ſet before thee Life and Death :* The Practice of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, was the ſame, ſince the Promise receiv'd its Accompliſhment. And they did not only teach in Perſon, but eſtabliſh'd alſo a ſtanding Miniſtry, or Order of Men, to carry on this Work to the End of the World ; in the Performance of which Chriſt promiſed to be with them ; (b) *Go and Diſciple all Nations, &c. and lo I am with you al- ways to the end of the World :* Not only to the end of that particular Age, as if the Promise had been limited to the Perſons of the Apoſtles, to whom he ſpoke theſe Words ; but to the end of the Gospel-Age, and the Conſummation of all things, ſo long as there were any to be diſciple'd or taught, and conſequently to their Succeſſors ; as the Phraſe, which is applied likewise to the Of- fices of Baptiſm and the Lord's-Supper, that in-

(a) *Deut. 6, 6.* (b) *Matth. 28, 19, 20.*

separably belong to the same Ministry, does in several Places of Scripture clearly import. And therefore, tho' the Apostle says of the Gospel, (d) *The Word of Faith which we preach, is nigh to the Christian in his Mouth to confess, and in his Heart to believe it*; yet notwithstanding he settled standing Rules to direct both Pastors and Flocks, Teachers and People, in the discharge of their respective Duties of Teaching and Hearing to the end of the World.

Nor the Second; as was abundantly prov'd before, from the Sufficiency of the Gospel-Revelation, which is equivalent to any new Discoveries that can be suppos'd necessary for the Spirit to make. So that by Writing of this Law in the Hearts of Christians, and putting it in their inward Parts, that they shall have no need to teach every one his Neighbour, is meant only, that the Law and Doctrine of the Gospel is plain and intelligible in it self; so obvious and agreeable to our Reason, and the natural Notions we have of God, that Men may easily understand it; and what upon their due Application, the Spirit of God will set home to their Hearts, and effectually imprint it on their Memory, by his ordinary Communication and Assistance, which is and always will be continued in the Christian Church. For, tho' the Promise of extraordinary Influence of the Spirit was made to the first Preachers of Christianity, and ought not to be extended beyond them; yet the Participation of it, in an ordinary Measure and Degree, was promis'd to all Christians in all Ages; and this Gift is be-

(d) Rom. 10. 8, 9.

stowed upon every particular Christian, and every sincere Believer ; for in this Sense, we receive the Promise of the Spirit by Faith ; And (d) *if any Man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

That this Gift extends to all Persons in all Times and Ages of the Church, to all that sincerely embrace the Christian Religion, and are admitted into it by Baptism, is plain from the latter part of that Discourse of St. Peter, which I had occasion to mention before ; *Repent, and be Baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.* And that this was not a Favour and Priviledge peculiar to the Primitive Times of Christianity, but common to all succeeding Ages, is evident from what follows, (e) *But the Promise, that is, of the Holy Ghost, is unto you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

And in this Sense, our Saviour makes good that Promise which he made to his Apostles, *to be with them always*, in the work of making Disciples, and baptizing them, *to the End of the World* ; that is, he would accompany the Labours of the Pastors and Teachers of his Church in all Ages, with such a Presence and Influence of his Spirit, upon those that were taught and baptised, as should be suitable and proportion'd to the Exigencies of the Church.

If it be said, that God who gave these extraordinary Communications of his Spirit in the A-

(e) Rom. 8. 9. (c) Acts 2. 39.

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postolical Age, is the same God still in ours, and therefore can and will do the same Things again:

I answer; That he is always the same God, and can do the same things, and reveal himself again if he pleases, is certain; but that he should always do the same Things, and inspire Men as he did the Prophets and Apostles, does not follow. For he came down before the *Israelites* (f) in Thunder and Fire upon *Mount Sinai*; but he did not do so in after-Times: He shed abroad the Gifts of Tongues and Miracles upon Christians in the Apostles Days; but he has not done so in any others since. He is the same God, and has the same Care and Kindness for his Church, and makes sufficient Provision for the instructing of it in all Times: But he does not always work the same Effects, but only according to our Occasions and Necessities. The Gift of Inspiration was necessary to the first Preachers of the Gospel, to recollect and explain Christ's Doctrine fully to them, and enable them effectually to publish and plant it in the World: And when that was done, this extraordinary Gift was no longer necessary: After-Ages having the Illuminations of those that went before, contain'd in the Writings of the Apostles, which were so full of Rules and Directions, and so well ratified by miraculous Attestations, to instruct them in all Christian Knowledge, needed no further extraordinary Helps. And therefore this Gift was then to cease, pursuant to That of the Apostle: (g) *Whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be Tongues they shall cease;*

(f) Exod. 19. 16, 18. (g) 1 Corin. 13. 9.

whether there be Knowledge, that is, inspired Knowledge, it shall vanish away : which seems to be a Prediction, that the Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues, and inspired Knowledge, so necessary to the Infancy of the Church, were to cease, when the Church was establish'd, and come to Maturity : So the Allusion the Apostle makes of the Church, runs parallel to the Age or State of Man ; and implies, that these extraordinary Assistances were to be but temporary ; *Whilst I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child.* This was the Childhood of the Church, but these Helps of the Infant-State were to vanish, as it took Root, and grew up to Manhood ; *When I became a Man, I put away Childish Things : We know in part, and we prophesie in part ;* that is, at present this Inspiration is imperfect ; this Epistle being one of the earliest written, and the Scripture-Canon at that time not being finished, and generally come abroad. But when that which is perfect is come ; that is, as I apprehend, not only the Perfection of the other World, but a more perfect State of the present Church, when the Canon shall be consummated, and commonly given out, then that which is in part shall be superceded, and done away. Extraordinary Gifts, which but few Persons are endued with, shall terminate ; in the Room of which shall succeed one compleat and universal Scripture-Rule by which all Mankind are to govern themselves in all Religious Matters.

But then, how can we understand this Rule without the help of an infallible Guide to interpret it ? Therefore says Mr. *Lacy's* Spirit,

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(h) *I would that Men should depend upon the same Authority for explaining the Scriptures, that they do for the enditing them.*

That pretended illiterate Gentleman might as well have said, that Men ought to depend on the same Authority, for rendring the Scriptures out of the Learned Languages, in which they were at first revealed and written, into the Modern Languages of all Nations under Heaven, that first endited them; and so spare themselves the Labour and Study of Learning those Tongues, for that purpose. For, tho' they understand the Language, and are capable of rendring the Words and Phrases into another Language, yet they can't possibly understand the Sense of what they so render, without a new Revelation. So that here must be a Revelation of a Revelation; as if God Almighty could not at once declare his Mind in Words, as expressive of his meaning, as one Man can use to another; but must be under a Necessity of sending his Spirit from time to time, to explain them to Mankind: For want of which the Holy Scriptures must have been lock'd up ever since the Days of extraordinary Inspiration; and so the Christian Church has all along continued in Darknes and Ignorance, about Sixteen Hundred Years, till this new Spirit of Revelation brought the Key from Heaven to open them. This is making the plain Word of God, of no use, without an infallible Interpreter; as if it were all involv'd in a Dark, mysterious Sense, like the Heathen Mysteries, which none understood, but few Mythologists, that were initiated into those Secrets.

(h) *Lacy's Prophet. Warn. Part I, p. 54. Part 2, p. 9;*

I will not say, this is charging the Divine Goodness with deriding Mankind with Mr. Fage's unintelligible Gibberish, *Tring Trang, Twing, Twang, Hing, Hang*; But I assert, that this Position is directly contrary to the Nature and Design of Divine Revelation, which was to make known, evident, and certain, that which before was a secret and uncertain, and not to be spelt out by the Light of Nature; and thereby enlighten Men's Understandings, fully instructing them in the Knowledge of God's Nature and Will; and of their Duty, and Obligation to him: That by this means they might be made Wise unto Salvation. Whatever is design'd or intended for this end, must in all Reason be plain and clear, and lie level to the several Capacities of those who are to be so instructed; and such are all sorts of Persons, not only Men of Letters; but also those of the meanest Education. What is (i) reveal'd then must be plain, so far as it concerns every Man's Salvation. What is not reveal'd, is mysterious, and unsearchable to us; which for that Reason we are not at all concern'd to know.

God, who wou'd have all Men come to the Knowledge of the Truth and be sav'd, hath for that purpose deliver'd all Truths, necessary to be known by us, in plain and obvious Words; and the Sense of what is so, wants no infallible Interpreter to expound it; a teachable Disposition, and a due Application of Mind free from Prejudice, and the industrious Use of Means common to Learned Men, with the ordinary Assistance of the Spirit, will bring us to a right Understanding of it.

(i) So things revealed and secret are opposed, *Deut. 29. 29.*

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There are indeed some passages in Scripture hard to be understood; but then what are so, are not necessary to be understood in order to Salvation; and so need no infallible Guide to help us to the Meaning of them. These Expositors have not prov'd them necessary to be known, nor by their extraordinary skill done any other Service towards opening the Sense of them, but only shew'd themselves the Fulfillers of those Prophecies, that speak of the Coming of false Prophets. If they do see farther into the Sense of obscure Places, they would do well to convince the World of it by better Reasoning, or by Demonstration of the Spirit and Power. To tell us only, That the Spirit assures them, this is the Sense and Meaning of Scripture, without enabling them to make it out, is *gratis dictum*; and as ridiculous as the Confidence of the *Popish* Champions, who say, their Church is Infallible, without giving any tolerable Proof of its Infallibility: Tho' I must confess, the Latter gives more Reason for their Interpretation of Scripture, than the First pretend to offer. They both join Hands in requiring blind Submission to their Authority, and say, that whoever would understand their Religion, must first come over to their Communion, and believe without Reason.

(u) *I love a ready obedient Servant, that does not stay to dispute, says Mr. Lacy's Spirit.*

Which is one of the most unreasonable and hazardous things in the World, contrary to the express and often-repeated Caution of Scripture; and which exposes Men to all manner of Illusions. For, at this rate, we must believe every one that either foolishly conceits, or falsely pretends, that he hath

(n) *Lacy's Proph. Warn. part. 2. p. 9.*

a Revelation ; both the Conceited and Enthusiast will say, they have Revelations with as much assurance, as those who are truly and divinely inspired. So did (w) *John Reeve the Baker* and *Lodowick Muggleton* his Speaker, who gave themselves out to be the two Witnesses, spoken of in the Revelation ; and in Consequence of it exercis'd a Commission above those of the true Prophets and Apostles ; by virtue whereof they laid aside all outward Worship, &c.

To take Men's Words in matters of such vast Importance, is not Faith, but Credulity. The *Papists* and these Prophets (I must not part them, since they agree) alledge for this, that they are infallibly in the right, and theirs is the true Religion ; because 'tis dictated to them by an infallible Spirit, and consequently whoever takes their words, can't be deceiv'd. So said the other Impostors ; nay, *Reeve* could not tell, whether he was a Moral Man, or an Immortal God, so full was he of the Spirit ; and thereupon assum'd a Power to bless or curse, save or damn to all eternity : Just of the same Spirit and Temper are These. But are they the more to be credited for This ? The more any People are in the right, the more willing and desirous should they be to have their Mission and Doctrine examin'd ; that Men might upon good Reason be satisfy'd, that they are true and Orthodox.

How earnestly did the true Apostles recommend their Doctrine to the strictest Examination, tho' it was undoubtedly the true Faith of *Christ* ? (x) *Prove all things* : (y) *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits*. And when any did so, how highly are they (z) commended for it ; and that without any

(w) *Bishop Chich.* Represent. of *Mugl.* (x) *1 Thess. 5. 21.* (y) *1 John 4. 1.* (z) *Acts 17. 11.*

Disparagment to the Apostles Inspiration and Infallibility? Whosoever discourages Men from taking this course, and are against submitting their Mission and Pretensions to Trial, give shrewd Suspicion, that they know something that is amiss in them which will not bear the Trial, and that makes them so loth to have them try'd.

But that Religion which is too good to be examin'd, is too dangerous to be believ'd; there being no other way by which we can be assur'd 'tis from God. If we take it upon trust, and it should prove false, we slight and act against the Apostle's Warning and Advice, not to believe every Spirit before we have try'd the Spirits, whether they are of God: And thereby we incur the (a) sad Judgment that beset *Cerah's* Abettors: Or the (b) unhappy Fate of a true *Prophet*; who yet for disobeying a Certain Command in compliance with an uncertain Suggestion, receiv'd his due Reward: (c) Or the worse Calamity that beset the whole Nation of the *Jews*, when they were carry'd captive into *Babylon*, for the like credulous Humour. These Instances serve for a Terror against the like Credulity; by which, as well as, by Unbelief, a Man may run a dangerous Risque. And therefore, as we ought not to dis-believe, where there is sufficient Evidence; so neither ought we to believe any thing, without sufficient grounds of Assurance. For, these Instances of the Divine severity upon Men's groundless Presumption, are recorded for our Admonition: And however Men's forward Credulity or unreasonable Incredulity may escape now in the time of God's Patience, his Judgment will one day find them out.

(a) Numb. 16. (b) 1 Kings 13. 1. (c) 2 Chron. 36.

But here the Matter deliver'd under the Operations of the Spirit, is urg'd as a Demonstration, that these are true Prophets, and no Counterfeits; for *so excellent, so pathetic, so well digested* (say they) *are their Prophecies; the words are so powerful and charming, so piercing to the very Heart and Soul, as to strike those that hear them with astonishment and admiration, that they think 'tis the voice of God, and not of a Man, &c.*

A swelling Character!

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?

After so promising a Beginning, one might justly expect some Noble Flights, some Sublime Prophecies and Heavenly Doctrines to ensue opening the most hidden Mysteries of Providence; and letting in most admirable Rays of Light, from the Sun of Righteousness; and deliver'd tho' in a more Majestick, yet more Familiar Stile, than that of the Noble and Evangelical *Isaiah*, or of the *Apostle* brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*; carrying such convincing and cogent Arguments, above human Composures, as might plainly discover the Divine Author and Wisdom from whence they proceeded.

But to the greater Admiration and Astonishment; *Parturiunt Montes*, &c. In the whole System of this Effusion, there are neither Dark or Myste-
 rious parts of Scripture open'd and explain-
 ed; nor any new Matter deliver'd, containing
 either Edifying Ideas and Notions of things, to
 enlighten and improve the Understanding, or new
 Rules to direct the Will and Affection, in matter
 of Repentance, or Practice. If God, or an Angel
 spoke by these Pretenders, we might easily know
 it by his Voice; for, his Voice would be Unison
 with his written Word. But so far are these Pro-
 phetic Rapsodies from bearing a Resemblance to the
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Divinely inspired Writings, that when compared to them, they look like Counterfeit Stones to an Oriental Diamond: Nay, they run in such wild incoherent Notions, blasphemous and immodest Expressions, as plainly discover whence they are; viz. from delirious and distempered Brains, or Diabolical Enthusiasm, the Symptoms are plain. For,

First, A Delirium, or natural Enthusiasm, arising from a disorder'd Brain, occasion'd by great Fervency of Temper, or violent Agitations of the animal Spirits, will necessarily impregnate the Fancy, cause the Images of Things to come into it very fast, and produce a very ready Invention of Matter, and copious Fluency of Words. So that, if under a Fit of this natural or casual Fervency, a Man's Fancy happens to run upon God and Religion, and if his Memory be well stor'd with Scripture-Phrases and Expressions, such as those which speak of Anti-Christ, of the Downfal of *Babylon*, and the Deliverance of the Church, (which these Men are said to have been taught to learn) 'tis no wonders if he prays or discourses in Scripture-Language with great Readiness, and with such Passion and Enlargement, as shall cause him assuredly to believe himself immediately inspired by the Spirit of God.

Instances enough might be given of this, not only among Christians, but also among the Votaries of Mahomet, Heathen Poets and Orators, nay, among Lunatics, whose Fancies have been often so strangely elevated and fructified by the Fervor of their Temper or Disease, that not only themselves, but they that heard them, thought, that they were mov'd and acted by extraordinary Impulses; though there was really not so much of the Spirit or Religion in them, as is in Religious Dreams or Nocturnal Visions. These Prophetick Effusions

ons seem to proceed from such like Cause, arising from excessive Fastings and Troubles of Mind, which in a manner were unavoidable in a Country ravaged by War, and where the Inhabitants were continually harass'd by a cruel Enemy, especially those in Arms, who like Partridges were chased over the Mountains. These and the like means, might well cause more than ordinary disorder in Nature, and fill their Brains with Vapours and Whimfies. Some therefore have laid the main Stress and Pinch of the Question upon this, as what gave Occasion to the first Rise of this new Sect of *Æolists*: And it may be fairly inferr'd even from what themselves declare, That when out of the Extatic Fit, they know little or nothing of that Matter, which is deliver'd by the Organ of their Mouths, while they are in it: No more does a Man in a Fit of Frenzy, or the Paroxysm of a Fever, remember any thing of that rambling Discourse, utter'd by him in his delirious Disorder, when he comes to himself again. And why may not Men at certain Seasons be subject to these, as many are to other distemper'd Fits?

And if this be the real Case of the Modern Enthusiasts; they are become Objects of Pity and Charity, and deserve to be pray'd for, as Lunatics, and the Unfortunate, rather, than condemn'd of Hypocrisy, or of a worse Design.

2dly, There is also a Diabolical Enthusiasm, of which we have sundry Instances, such as *Major Weir*, *David George*, and that Monster of Wickedness *John Basilides*, Duke of *Russia*, who had all of them so wonderful a Gift of Elocution, as did not only charm and ravish those that heard them; but seemed in the Opinion of the most discerning and judicious Persons, to exceed the Power of Nature.

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Since wicked Men have been thus inspir'd, we may conclude, without breach of Charity, that they were moved by an Evil Spirit : And when Men are inspir'd by the Devil, who has the Command of Languages ; 'tis the less Wonder, if he enables them to speak in Tongues : For, so he did (b) the *Pythian* Prophetess, who spake those Things in Verse upon her Inspiration ; which at other Times, she was not able to read. Several (c) others are reported to have spoke several Languages in their Fits, which out of them they did not understand. Mr. *Lacy* is said to do the same ; let him shew by what Spirit he is acted. The Apostles, who were inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, understood the Tongues they spoke ; which the Heathen Prophets, and these Modern Ones do not. By inspiring his Votaries this way, no doubt the Devil may very much promote his own Ends, viz. puff up giddy Minds with Pride and Self-Conceit, and the more effectually recommend Seducers and false Teachers to the World. 'Tis but reasonable to suppose, that this subtle Agent, who so thoroughly understands his own Game, will in some Cases be forward enough to do it ; tho' the Effect seemingly tend, to destroy his Interest, and overthrow his Kingdom. For, he acts in Disguise, often transforming himself into an Angel of Light, that he may thereby the more undiscernably gain upon Mankind. The Saviour of the World was assaulted by him with Arrows out of his own Quiver, the Holy Scripture ; and consequently, we may reasonably presume, that he will be as ready now to furnish his Agents with the very same Weapons, to work the Fall of well-

(b) *Plato in Epinour.* (c) *Peter Apontensis.*

meaning Men, whose Faith and Stedfastness could no other way be Chagrin.

2. The present acting of these Pretenders, and the Tendency of their Inspirations, are not only dissonant from, but destructive of the Holy Scripture. Nay, they have already alrer'd the Institutions of its Charter, and to support the Innovation are setting up another Gospel. By thrusting themselves into the Service of the Altar, without a legal Call, they have disannull'd the Ministerial Institution, which our Saviour himself appointed, and his Apostles confirmed; and which was to continue by a constant Succession of Men, to the end of the Christian Oeconomy, as the Type of it in the Aaronical and Levitical Priesthood did, thro' all Revolutions, to the period of the *Jewish* State: The Pastors and Ministers of the Christian Church being appointed by God, as well as those of the *Jewish*, like all other Divine Institutions, must remain in the same State, till it shall please God to change, or wholly lay them aside at Christ's Coming; the same Authority being requir'd to change any Institution, which first made it. Now for their abolishing this Institution, they shou'd shew their Authority, which must be prov'd by as good, clear, and sufficient Evidences and Testimonials, as the Authority, by which this Institution was establish'd, did. If they do not, we have just Reason to look upon them as Usurpers of the Holy Office.

And here, if they do not give Sight to the Blind, make the Lame to walk, heal all manner of Diseases, and raise the Dead: Nay, unless they shew Christ descending again from Heaven, dying, rising and ascending; their Miracles will fall short of what their Revelation stands in Competition

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petition with, and pretends to alter ; and consequently we must conclude it to be *another Gospel*, a Suppositious Revelation, and what is so far from deserving any Credence to be given to it, or regard paid it, that 'tis to be abominated. It's *Anathema*.

But their Practice stops not in single Instances, they are fairly taking a larger Stride, and setting up an entire Rule of Faith of their own, to render the Holy Scriptures useleſs and obſolute, and tempt the World to lay them aſide, and in the room of them, ſubmit themſelves to the Conduct of this new Light, and receive the Voluminous Webb, that is ſpinning off apace, and carefully taken in Writing by able Scribes; which at this quick rate, will ſoon ſwell to a bigger Bulk, than that of our Holy Bible. What other Aim or Tendency can theſe Operations and Prophetic Warnings be ſuppos'd to have ? for they are ſaid to be dictated by the ſame Divine Spirit; with that of Holy Scriptures; and which conſequently muſt be equally the Word of God, and of equal Authority.

This ſeems to be the plain Interpretation of them. When theſe have once gained footing in Men's Faith, who knows, what they will preſent the World with next, and whither they will lead their Followers ? By what already appears, the Pretenſion is Literally and in its direct Senſe, another Gospel : and as ſuch muſt either be a falſe One, or charge our Saviour's Goſpel with Imperfection. The Charge is without grounds : To ſet abar and preach then a falſe Goſpel, adds a ſort of Blaſphemy to the Impoſture, by aſcribing it to the Holy Spirit, and making the God of Truth to juſtify a Falſity. If it be a true One, what Proof do they give of the truth of it ? do they work Mi-
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racles? do they speak Languages, as the Apostles in an instant did; who discoursed like *Philosophers* (tho' they had no Human Learning) of the sublimest Arguments; and with as much Freedom used the Speech of the several foreign Nations they instructed, as if they had been Natives of their Countries? But we do not hear, that These, with all their *French Air*, have yet attempted to do it, even in the *English Tongue*, without the help of an Interpreter. This brings me to

2. The other Rule propos'd for Trying and Judging Doctrines and Teachers by; which is the Power of working Miracles, under which I comprize *Prophecies*. All the Revelations that God ever made to the World being confirm'd by this Testimony; 'tis an Argument, that it was his Intention, we should receive no Doctrine as come from him, till we saw it prov'd by this Evidence; which to prevent all Fallacy or Delusion, must be clear, full and beyond all reasonable Exception; and before it can be such, it must be repeated in several Instances, and of a considerable continuance; otherwise it proves not the Cause it's produc'd for; nor lays any Obligation upon Men to believe either one or the other. The Authority therefore of all New Missions pretended to be from God, must be made appear by this Testimony, that they are really so: Then they may command Reception in the World, and there can be no danger in giving them credit; provided they carry no Repugnancy to the Divine Perfections, and the Revelations already made; but on the contrary tend to promote the Honour of God, and the Good of Mankind. For, here 'tis a plain Indication, that God appears and stands on their side, and bears witness to their Mission, who work Miracles in confirmation of what they say. Such

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Credentials were never question'd by wise and considerate Men,

Nicodemus himself, however afraid of owning the thing openly, acknowledg'd the Divine Mission of our Saviour, when he saw his Miracles; (c) *We know thou art a Teacher come from God: for none can do these Miracles which thou dost, except God be with him.*

And as Miracles are an uncontestable Evidence of Divine Authority, when wrought to attest a Doctrine that bears God's Image and Superscription; so God constantly made use of them, whenever he made new Discoveries of his Will; and his Ambassadors on that occasion always produc'd this Broad-Seal for their Credentials, to gain them Credit and Reception, and were never sent without it.

When therefore God sent *Moses* to the People of *Israel*, the holy Man would have excus'd himself from delivering that Message, till he receiv'd this Credential; saying, (d) *Behold they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* Upon this, God gives him the Power of Miracles, to be an Evidence to them, *That they might believe, that the God of their Fathers had appeared unto him.* And it shall come to pass, says God, if they will not believe thee after the first Sign, yet they will believe after the latter Sign; or if they dis-believe after that too, thou shalt work another Sign: And so he was to go on in working miraculous Signs, till he had convinc'd them.

This was God's invariable Method all along in the Old Testament. Thus likewise when He sent his Son into the World; He bare witness to

(c) John 3. 2. (d) Exod. 4. 1, &c.

him by more and greater Miracles, than any that Moses, or the other Prophets wrought.

And when the Son came in his Father's Name; tho' his Coming was *in the fulness of time*, and a fulfilling of *Jewish* Types and Prophecies; and tho' the Arguments were rational and convincing, by which He prov'd to the Doctors his Descent from Heaven; when, at twelve Years old, He sat in the midst, by of them, *both hearing them, and asking them Questions*: Yet He did not upon those grounds alone require, or expect the *Jews* to give credit to Him; till He had given them farther Proofs: And therefore at thirty Years of Age, when he entred on his Prophetic Office, (e) He went about all the Cities and Villages, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and working Miracles in confirmation of it, where-ever he came, *healing every sickness, and every disease among the People*, without refusing any that apply'd themselves to him; insomuch that his Miracles were as visible, as his Person, and more convincing, than his Doctrine. For, his most avowed Enemies, (f) the Chief Priests and *Pharisees*, declar'd in publick Council, that He did *many Miracles*. They must be unreasonably partial, and bigotted to their prejudice, if they did not then believe Him: Tho' we do not indeed find, that any truly believed on Him, till they had seen his Miracles.

It was upon this, as St. John particularly notes, (g) *His own Disciples believed on Him*: Yet he never blam'd them for not doing it before; nor is there any Intimation, that He ever charg'd the *Jews* with want of Faith, before He had done such great and wonderful Works among them, as ne-

(e) Matth. 9. 35. (f) Joh. 11. 47. (g) Joh. 2. 11.

ver Man did. And when they continued still obstinate, he did not pronounce on them the Sentence of final Condemnation, till their Obduracy was grown to be a proof against all means of Conviction; no, till they had utterly rejected Him, and the Greatest of all his Miracles; namely, his Resurrection from the dead, tho' declar'd and attested by Eye-witnesses of their own, besides the Apostles, and the corroborating Evidence of the Miracles which they did among them, for forty Years after.

The same admirable Temper was shew'd by his Apostles, and the same Method observ'd in the Execution of their Commission; they always gave Signs before they requir'd Faith.

Upon what account then can any Person that comes after them, expect to find Entertainment, who does not take the same Method, and every where produce this Evidence; to which, as their main Credentials, *Christ* and his Apostles constantly appeal'd? So, when *John* the Baptist sent his Disciples to our Saviour, to be satisfy'd whether he were the *Messias*, he refer'd them to his Miracles; (b) *Go and shew John again those things that ye hear and see; the Blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, and the Deaf hear, and the Dead are raised up. If I bear witness of my self, my witness is not true; (that is, ought not to pass for true) but there is another that beareth witness of me; for the Works which the Father hath given me to finish; the same Works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*

(b) Matth. 11. 45.

'Tis worth observing with what generous Temper and Humanity our Lord receives these Messengers, who were really ill-affected towards him and the Fame of his Miracles; because their Master's Character was lessen'd and eclipsed by them: He does not upbraid them for their Prejudice or Unbelief towards his Person and Performances; but presently, for their Conviction, falls on working all sorts of Miracles; so the Text says, (i) *And in that same Hour, he cured many of their Infirmities, and Plagues, and of Evil Spirits, &c.* And then said, *Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard.* Now instead of all these convincing Demonstrations who he was, had our Saviour only this to say for himself, (as the new Prophets have) *Go, tell John, that I have the Gift of bodily Agitations, and the Spirit of Prophecy; and I will some Months hence work Miracles, and speak Latin and Greek by Inspiration;* this Evidence had amounted to just nothing at all.

The same extraordinary Power appear'd in his Disciples and Followers: Who, when they went forth to preach the Glad-Tydings and Institutions of the Gospel, did not feed People with Promises and Expectations of Miracles, but actually did them at first Sight: And to prevent all Suspicion of Fraud and Imposture, they were done, not among themselves, or in a Room, and then given out and noised abroad, but in as publick manner as those of their Master before; that every Man might see them, and judge of them. Therefore 'tis said, (k) *God gave Testimony to the Word of his Grace, and granted Signs and Wonders to be*

(i) Luke 7. 21, 22. (k) Acts 14. 3.

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done by *their Hands*. The Fame hereof presently spread, and thereupon Multitudes of People ran in to them, and believed; and (1) sick Folks, from all Parts in great Abundance, were brought into the Streets where they were to come, that they might be healed by the very Shadow of them, as they passed by; and accordingly were healed every one.

From these Premisses 'tis evident, beyond Contradiction, that the Holy Scriptures constantly resolve the Divine Authority of a Person, or Revelation into Miracles, as one of the Essential, and inseparable Marks, by which 'tis distinguished from Imposture and mere Pretence, and one necessary Proof of its being from God; and that without these Evidences, neither of them are to be receiv'd upon any other Account whatsoever. For many false Prophets are gone out into the World, who all come in God's Name, and by Virtue of a Sham-Commission from him, say and act unwarrantable Things. And if we were to believe every Man upon his bare Pretence, and refuse none, as the old *Romans* did by the Deities of other Countries, who admitted all into their *Calendar*: What a Meddle of Religion should we shortly have of these Pretenders Compositions? What a distracted Condition should we be in, by means of contrary Principles?

But to support the Authority of their Mission, the modern Prophets being not without their Pretensions this way; I will therefore, first demonstrate, that Miraculous Gifts, or the Power of Working Miracles, I mean such as the Apostles were endow'd with, to which these Men lay

(1) Acts. 5.

claim, is long since ceas'd. Secondly, Enquire into the Reality and Nature of those Performances, which they would put upon the World for Miracles.

First, I will demonstrate, that Miraculous Gifts, or the Power of Working Miracles, such as the Apostles had, is long since ceas'd in the Christian Church. This Power was highly necessary at the first planting of the Gospel, to introduce it, and to give Countenance to it in the World. For, this new Doctrine being destitute of all other Helps and Advantages, and yet being to make it's way through, against all Oppositions, either of other Religions that were in possession, or of the Prejudices, Lusts, and Interests of Men, as well as of the Powers of the World; that every where vigorously opposed it; there was then a Necessity of an extraordinary Power to accompany the Preaching of it; to convince the World of its Divine Original; and to support and encourage the Preachers of it in their Labours and Sufferings.

For these and the like Reasons, it pleased the Founder and Finisher of this Religion, to pour out so plentifully great Variety of Miraculous Gifts on the first Preachers of it, and to continue to them the same, till the Devil's Empire, and Pagan Idolatry, in its main Strength, was destroy'd; and the Gospel settled in the greatest part of the World then known.

After that, as the Reason of these Gifts ceas'd, so did the Gifts themselves; and in two or three Ages after the Apostles, we hear no more of them.

And now, that the Gospel is generally entertain'd, *the Kingdoms of the World*, being in a great measure become *the Kingdoms of the Lord*,
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and of his Christ, there appears no such Occasion of Supernatural Means, as were once necessary. God Almighty who does all things in Weight and Measure, has thought fit to leave Religion, to be carry'd on in more human Ways, by its own rational Force, and the ordinary Influences of his Grace on the sincere Preaching of it.

If it be suggested, that upon the creeping in of Abuses and Superstition, and their blending themselves with Religion, so that it were difficult in that Intermixture to distinguish Truth from Error ; extraordinary Inspiration, and the Power of working Miracles at such a Time, is highly necessary, for the discovering of those Corruptions, and also to convince Men of the Necessity of purging them out.

In answer to this, It may be justly said ; that so long as the true Religion is to be found in the Holy Scripture ; This fixt and Universal Rule is abundantly sufficient to all these Purposes ; by which, all Errors may be rectify'd, and Religion brought back to its antient Standard. And this Rule hath as much Authority with those, who sincerely acknowledge it to have proceeded from the Mouth of God, as any new Revelations and Miracles can possibly have. At the Reformation therefore from the Church of *Rome*, our Reformers, without such new Assistances, found out those Corruptions, that had so very much darkened the Beauty and Purity of true Christianity ; and by the Direction of Scripture and the common Assistance of the Divine Spirit, restor'd it to its genuine and pristine Form ; which the Church of *England* having retain'd ever since, as she has no occasion, so makes no such Pretensions.

The *Roman* Church indeed still claims to the Power of Miracles, which according to *Bellarmin*, the great Champion of that Communion, must always continue as a Mark of the true Church. In this Claim, Enthusiasts, and the Leaders of new Sects, have in all Ages to this Day, agreed with that Church. We will in the

2d. place enquire into the Reality and Nature of those Performances, which they would put upon the World for Miracles.

For the Resolution of which, it will be necessary, that we consider, what a Miracle is ; and for what end 'tis wrought.

First, A Miracle is an Effect, or something wrought in Nature, contrary to the Course and Laws of Nature, and above its Power to produce ; and therefore must be caus'd by some Supernatural Agent ; either by God himself who has the Command of, and when he pleases, over-rules, the Laws and Powers of Nature ; or by virtue of God's Authority or his Permission, by an Angel ; it being therefore said of Angels, in respect of their great Activity and Power, that they *excel in Strength*.

There are several strange and unaccountable Phænomena's effected by second Causes, or Artful Operations in Nature and *Magick* ; which may be surprizing and amazing enough ; and to an ignorant Understanding seem Miraculous. But though a Man can't tell how such things might be done by any natural Power ; yet they carry not that full Conviction with them, as to deserve being owned for Arguments of a Divine Power. Of this sort, were the Magicians Serpents, at the famous Trial of Skill between *Moses* and the two *Egyptian* Priests, *Jannes* and *Jambres* ; which doubtless were very astonishing, and in all Probability would have took with *Egyptian* Specta-

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tors, had not *Moses's* Miracle over-rul'd and curb'd them : *Friar Bacon's* Speaking-Head ; and the *Indian* Talismen, whose Operations seem excited and directed by Spirits, with many others of the like kind ; which arise no higher, than the Power of Nature and Art. The Bodily Agitations, sometime since left off by the *Quakers*, and now resum'd by the Modern Prophets, are so far from being Miraculous, that they seem plainly to be no other, but the Tricks of *Legerdemain*, or the Feats of Juglars, who delight to amuse with surprizing Appearances and Trifles : Thus Impostors in all Ages acted their part. How strangely were the Heathen Prophets and Sybils agitated in their Oracles ? With what Pangs and Throws, Fury and Rage, did the *Pythian* Prophetess at *Delphos* use to lay about her, to swell with the God which she pretended to be big with ; till she was deliver'd of her Burthen, and had eas'd her self, by foaming out her Responses and Illusions ? And what astonishing Figures did *Simon Magus* make ? What Tricks and Juggles were plaid by him, till he insatuated the credulous Multitude, and made them believe him to be *the Mighty Power of God* ?

These odd Resemblances, *Elias Marion* would have the World believe, to be an Imitation of the *Jewish* Prophets, who, as he says, were thus (n) previously prepar'd for receiving the Prophe-tick Visions. He would have done well to have given some better Proof of it, than his idle Tradition out of One of the *Jewish* Rabbins ; which, like the Popish Traditions, corrupted the Sacred Text, and in too many Particulars rendred the

(n) Mar. Decl. p. 30.

Word of God of none Effect; and for that very reason is said to be rejected by some of the Modern Jews themselves.

But *Marion's* Defect is helpt out (o) by Mr. *Lacy*, with some Instances of *these Figurative Signs*, of which he desires some Sober Account. In answer to his Request, till he has a better, let him take the following Relation.

1. 'Tis to be consider'd, that to ape the Holy Prophets in Actions exterior of the Spirit, as it does not make a Man a true Prophet; neither is it any sure sign, of one. For, this is no more than what most Impostors have done; even (p) *Richard Hathoway*, that most arrant Cheat, might have pleaded this, while he was carrying on his villanous Design. Therefore Imitation, were it carried on to Perfection, is no more an Argument of an inspir'd Person, than an Ape is of a rational Creature. And we desire Mr. *Marion's* Spirit to make out, how an affected Agitation of the Body, which a Man gives to himself, can any way be a Qualification, or as he calls it (q) a previous Adaption for the Reception of the Prophetick Vision.

2. The External Symptoms which some of the Prophets at Times might have, are to be understood not in an absolute, but in the Sense of Scripture, which speaks according to the Customs of those Times and Countries; to which in several Cases, a particular Advertence and Regard must be had. Thus by the Prophet's *walking naked and bare-foot*, is meant no more, than their being stript of their upper Garments; as those who are but

(o) *Lacy's Vind.* p. 6. (p) *Hathoway's Trial*, 1702. (q) *Mar.* Dec. p. 26. (r) *Job.* 22. 9.

meanly cloath'd, are said to be naked, and the
(s) naked are said to be stript of their Cloathing ;
 which is spoken by way of Comparison, and in
 a figurative Sense ; for properly, and strictly
 Speaking, *there is no stripping of the naked, unless*
it be of their Skin.

In the same Sense, *(t) Saul's stripping himself, and*
lying Naked, and the Prophets with him, is un-
 derstood only of the *one being divested of his Roy-*
al Robes, and the others of their outward Garments ;
 just as some put off the Surplice, and others the
 Cloak to preach. And when *(u) Isaiab* was
 commanded to put off his Sackcloth or Mourning
 Habit to his short under Garment, to prefigure
 the Shameful Captivity of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, he
 is said to *walk naked and bare-foot*, in token of
 Mourning and Dejection, like the Condition of
 Prisoners taken in War ; which was also used on
 the great Fast, or Day of Expiation, and in
 Funerals. But, upon all those solemn Occasions,
 they wore their under Garments and Socks on
 their Feet.

The like may be said of *Ezekiel's smiting with*
his Hands, and stamping with his Foot, as a To-
 ken of extream Sorrow and Grief, for the Abo-
 minations of the House of *Israel*: Not that
 the Prophet was to strike any Person with his
 Fist ; no such matter as *Mr. Lacy*, according to
 his and *Betty Grey's* Practice in their Prophetick
 Rage, seem to apprehend it : But as is usual in
 Cases of Lamentations in Times of Afflictions,
 he was to *smite his Hands together*, or, according
 to the *Hebrew*, *Hand to Hand*, as it is in the
 Margin of the Bible.

(s) Job 22. 6. [1 Corin. 4. 11. (t) 1 Sam. 19. 24. (u) Ezek.
6. 11.

Now, put all these bodily Signs together, and they will amount to nothing in comparison of the New Prophets *Sighing, Hiccoping, Gulping, Thumping themselves against the Ground, rowling and laying about them, Tossing their Arms and Thumping their Auditors, with many other Antic and Undecent Actions.*

3. As to *Extasies*, how sparingly do the Scriptures speak of them? There are not many Instances of them in the Old Testament, and in the New, we read, that St. Peter had only one; and St. Paul but one or two, of which he speaks with great reserve and modesty. But in neither of them, there is not one Instance of any such thing as Furious Actions. I remember none of the other Apostles ever subject to *Extatick Fits*: And where they happen'd, there is not the least mention made, that they proceeded from any internal Impressions of the Spirit; but they seem'd rather to be caus'd by some extraordinary Appearances of Angels, or some great outward Glory, which were sometimes represented to some of their outward Senses. When such appear'd, 'tis no wonder they should fall into a Trance.

The most judicious Writers both *Jewish* or *Christian*, generally agree in their Judgment, about distinguishing betwixt the Prophetick Inspirations given by God, and the *Dæmoniacal* Rants, with which *Dæmons* inspired their *Heathen* Votaries: The First were very calm and sedate, the Latter full of furious Agitations and Distractions, wherein the Inspired Person was usually carried out to the furious Transports of Rage and Madness.

But, in the Prophets of God, tho' the Impulse might sometimes be strong, and over-power the bodily Senses; yet never so, as to ruffle the Faculties of the Mind.

Moses

(w)
2, 123
Epiph.
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Moses had no previous Dispositions, to make him capable of the Divine Vision: He could go directly to God, and consult him, as a Man speaketh with his Friend. The other Prophets, tho' they might be at times astonished, and weakned at the sight of God, yet were never discomposed as to their Reason: So One of the Fathers tells us; (w) 'A Prophet (says he) had his Oracles dictated by the 'Holy Spirit, which he delivered strenuously, and 'with the most firm and unshaken Constancy of his 'Rational Powers. In all the New Testament we find not the least Intimation, that the Apostles were ever affected with such Symptoms. The gentle Descent of the *Holy Ghost* (x) in a *bodily Form* upon our Saviour at his *Baptism*, seems by way of Emblem to inform us, how gently the Apostles were to receive the Holy Spirit; which accordingly descended *on the* (y) *Day of Pentecost*, without causing any manner of Disorder in them. (z) *God hath not given us (saith St. Paul) the Spirit of Fear, that is of Servile fear, but of Power, of Love, and of a sound Mind.* We read that the House where they were assembled was once shaken, but not that their Bodies were ever agitated. St. Paul indeed told the *Corinthians*, that he was among them (a) *in weakness, & ἐν φόβῳ καὶ τρέμῳ πολλῷ, and in much Fear and Trembling*; but not a word of any *Epileptic Fit*, or *Convulsions of Body*, that he was disorder'd with; nor that his *Fear and Trembling*, were caus'd by Impressions of the Spirit: No, 'tis plain they were the Effect of the great Concern he had on his Mind, for discharging his Apostolic Office with all Faith-

(w) "Ο πρῶτος μετὰ κλίσεως λογισμῶν καὶ ἀταραχίας, καὶ ἐκείνῳ ἐν συνειδήσει αἰσῶν, καὶ τα πάντα ἡρώμεν λόγον. *Epiph. adv. Mount. Her. 48. P. 176.* (x) *Matth. 3. 16.* (y) *Acts 2.* (z) *2 Tim. 1. 7.* (a) *1 Cor. 2. 3.*

fulness; and also of his Solitude and Care for their stedfast continuance in the Faith, maugre all the oppositions, which the *Jews* made against it; which had been so violent, that (b) *Christ* thought fit to appear and encourage him in the Encounter. The Phrase often occurs, and is taken in this Sense: Thus, (c) *Servants are requir'd to be obedient to their Masters with Fear and Trembling*; and (d) *all Men to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, that is, with the utmost Concern, Care and Diligence.

This Apostle, it's true, was charg'd once with Madness; not for any Extatic Fit, or Frenzy, that he ever labour'd under; but for that most Rational Apology, which without any preparative Agitations, he made before King *Agrippa* and his Council; which none of them were able to reply to; only ignorant *Festus* would say something, be it ever so ridiculous; as the Text takes notice; (e) *And as he spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, (carrying more Noise than Sense) Paul, thou art beside thy self, much Learning* hath made thee mad.* But what a quick, sedate, wise and Return did our Apostle make to that weak and abusive Charge; by which even an *Agrippa* was compell'd, against his Natural Inclination and Interest, to confess himself, *almost persuaded to be a Christian*: But he said, *I am not mad, most noble Festus, but I speak forth the words of Truth and Sobriety, &c.*

Yet, *Elias Marion* makes these Frantick Convulsion Fits (f) *the necessary Tokens of the presence of the Spirit, whereby what comes from its Operation*

(b) Acts 18. 9. (c) Ephes. 6. 5. (d) Phil. 2. 12. (e) Acts 26. (f) Mar. Decl. p. 21.

is distinguished from what does not; as if there could be no true Prophecies, but what come from those, that were taught the Art of Managing the Body, to move Admiration, by *William Du Serre*, who is said to have open'd the first School of this Fanaticism in France; whose Pupils have shew'd as good a hand in instructing others, making them such Masters; that they beat all the Disciples of *George Fox* at their own Game.

2. The next Thing we shall take notice of, is their extravagant (g) *Fastings for six Days, and sometimes double that time, running; order'd by the Spirit, and without intermediate Eating, solemnly observ'd*: which they seem to set forth as a miraculous Subsistence, without the necessary Support of Life, and without injuring the Constitution. The truth of this is very much to be question'd, the more, because of their vain Ostentation of it. This has ever been the Pretence of false Prophets and Sham-Apostles, who run very high this way, above the regular Discipline of the real Apostles.

Our Blessed Saviour was so far from making any shew of this rigorous Severity, that he was reproached by the *Scribes and Pharisees*, (who applauded themselves for their much Fasting) to be a *Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners*. But those who go about to deceive, always pretend something extraordinary this way, to raise People's Wonder and Astonishment. This made the poor Widows so taken with them of Old, that they thought, they could not do better with their Houses and Estates, than to put them into the

(g) Mar. Decl. 16, 17.

Hands of Men so mortified to the World; till they found notwithstanding their Sheeps Cloathing, that by their Devouring they were ravenous Wolves.

The *Montanists* and other false Teachers were much stricter, and more frequent in those bodily Exercises, than the *Catholick Christians*. And these latter Pretenders bid fair for the Severities of the *Heathen Religion*; which enjoin'd so many days Fast, and such Hardships in acts of Self-denial, to be undergone in some of its Mystical Initiations, that Men sometimes perish'd, before they could pass through them. Yet these they were to perform in order to the purifying of their Souls, as they suggested, and to bring them safe to the State they were in, before they came into the World.

Since then, in the beginning of the *Christian Church*, and long before that, these were the common Pretextes and Artifices of Deceivers; that the same should be made use of over again, is the less Wonder. But, it moves one's Compassion to see, how strangely apt People are to be deluded by Impostors, when they pretend to Acts of Mortification, above what the holy Rules of the *Gospel* require. This Discipline regularly applied with discretion is recommended, as a means of Religion, not as an end to rest in; which when joyned with Prayer and Almsgiving, is acceptable to God, and a proper Instrument also, to bring the Body under; that the Flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may more readily obey his godly Motions in Righteousness and true Holiness.

3. Another Miracle they pretend, is the several sorts of Predictions, which they say they have among them. The Prediction of future things, and the Knowledge of Men's Hearts, is undoubtedly a Mira-

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Miracle ; and the peculiar Prerogative of Divine Omniscience : Because such things lie too remote for any Finite Understanding to penetrate or discover, 'Tis God alone, that *knows the Hearts of the Children of Men*, and is a Discerner of their *Thoughts*. All things are open and naked to his All-seeing Eye : Nothing can be hid, or concealed from his All-commanding View. For this very Reason, the Idols of the *Heathens* are challeng'd, to give this Argument of their Divinity ; Shew (b) *the things*, says the Prophet, *that are to come hereafter, that we may know, that ye are Gods*. What the *Heathen Idol* could not do, the *Camisars* lay a special Claim to ; (i) who, if we'll take their words for it, can discern the *Hearts and Thoughts of other Men*, and reveal many other things which they could not be acquainted with in a Natural way : And they are very positive, That the Events always answered the Predictions, and every thing was fulfilled according to the Order given from Heaven, for executing the same.

This puts me in Mind of a Grand Impostor, I somewhere met with ; who under Pretension of being the true *Messiah*, went about, vending his Counterfeit Wares of Illusions and Sham-miracles, till the Government was alarm'd, and the Man taken up ; who thereupon told the King of the Country, that demanded of him a Sign of his Divine Mission and Authority ; if he would command an Executioner to take off his Head, he should presently see him come to Life again. A better Proof of his Divinity could not well be desir'd : Orders accordingly were given ; the Head dancing off, put an end to the Cheat.

(b) Isa. 41. 23. (i) Cry from the Desert, p. 90. 109.

The Story Naturally, and very unluckily applies it self to these Men's Case, as they themselves represent it: The Heads of how many hundreds of them fell a Victim to the Fury of their Masters the *French King*? When they had the Spirit of Prophecy, and could foretell things to come; 'tis strange! they did not foresee this. But, it was entirely conceal'd from them in the very height of their Inspirations, in their own Country: And yet since they are sent to this Land of Liberty, as they call it, upon what Errand they best know; their Spirit can reveal to them the sad Fates, impending over other People's Heads, and denounce very dreadful Judgments, just ready to take hold of us: Which, may God avert, and not permit wicked and designing Men, under the Guise of setting up a New Religion, to have a Hand in bringing them.

According to the plain Sense of their Prophecies, *the Great and terrible Day of Universal Judgment is coming in few Days, or Months at farthest*: And as the Fore-runner of That; God has now drawn his Sword, and will not put it up, till the whole Earth be cleansed; till all, however righteous in other Respects, who oppose this Message to be from God, shall be destroy'd by Lightnings, Thunder-bolts, Earth-quakes, Poysonous Fogs, and Vapours, and Destroying Angels, who are to come down from Heaven for this Execution.

These are Solemn and Dreadful Things! which being of the last Consequence, every Man ought to consider very seriously, and be well-advis'd and instructed about them; that their approaching may not surprize.

As for intermediate Judgments preceding the Great Day, were there no more certain Bodings of them, than these Mens Prognostications, who have so often deceiv'd, and been deceiv'd themselves, we had no great Reason for such dismal Apprehensions. Without the Foresight and Presages of such Almanack-makers, 'tis no difficult thing to tell the World, of God's Judgments, when they are so visible, and lay so hard upon the Neck of *Christendom*, by almost an Universal War: How they will terminate, we have reason to think, 'tis as great a Secret to them, as to other People. For, tho' they have the Confidence to tell us, (k) *that their Prophecies are every Day fulfilling in great many Particularities*; yet no body else can discern it; but on quite the contrary, find them egregiously failing in several Things: To instance in no more, they predicted, *That a certain Knight should be made Strait of his bodily Imperfection, and his Lady should die by Michaelmas last.* Neither of which are come to pass; the two Honourable Persons who must very well know, what Prophet said it, continue both in the same State, without the least Alteration either in Nature, or in Morals.

This one Instance is enough to overthrow the Faith and Credit of the whole Prophecy; and an Argument, that the Prophet was deceived. For, this is the Token which God gave us by *Moses*, to know a false Prophet by; (l) *If thou say in thy Heart, how shall we know the Word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a Prophet speaketh in the*

(k) Lacy's Propb. Wren. Part I. p. 13. Preface Propb. Wapping, Part II. p. 5. (l) Deut. 18. 21, 22.

Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is, the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken presumptuously: Thou shalt not be afraid of him.

This Rule indeed has one Exception; which is the Case of a wicked People or Nation, that take Warning by the Denunciation of an approaching Judgment, threatened against them; and by their timely Repentance and turning away from their Sins, avert the Execution of it. But, where there is no Change in the Party concern'd in the Prophecy, and the Event foretold, doth not punctually come to pass, we have a Warrant from God to reject that Propheerick Spirit, and to pay it none of that Fear and Reverence, which we all owe to a Divine Inspiration, when sufficiently attested to us.

And there is this further reason for it, because we know, that *nothing of the Word of Lord*, (to whose Prescience all the future Events are fixed and certain, be they never so contingent in their Causes, the Chain whereof lies in his Hand,) *can fall to the Ground, but will be fulfilled in its Season.*

Their Denouncing also, that *God will leave none on Earth, but them that have this extraordinary Gift*, is against what is Written (m); that *the Tares and the Wheat must stand together, till the Harvest; which will be at the end of the World; when the Goats also are to be separated from among the Sheep.* But when that most solemn and illustri-

(m) Matth.

ous Time will be, we believe is the greatest Secret of all, and will never be known till it comes; we have St. Peter's Authority for it, who speaking of the general Judgment of the World, which by way of Eminency, he calls *the Day of the Lord*, tells us, (o) *That the Day of the Lord will come, as a Thief in the Night*; that is, it will surprize Men suddenly and unexpectedly, because no Man can tell when it will be; it will steal upon the World, as a Thief does into a House by Night. But how can this possibly be, if that Time be known before-hand?

Men have assum'd a great deal of Freedom, and made very bold with God, by taking upon them to declare his determinate Will in this matter, before it plainly appear'd he had reveal'd it. How miserably has the Sacred Text been rackt, and forced to speak the Sense and Language of Men? Whose great Presumption, the Testimony of time, and their own Experiment, have sufficiently confuted; that one would think, Men who had any Respect or Veneration for the Divine Oracles, should have a greater Guard upon themselves, by the woful Miscarriages of those, that had gone that way before, how they venture to expose their Authority.

(p) Mr. Jurieu, Beverly, and others of great Note have had the Misfortune to see, how widely they had failed beyond the Compass: By whose rash Attempts and Miscarriages Men should at

(o) 2 Pet. 3. 10. (p) Jurieu's *Accomplishment of Scriptural Prophecies*, sets the full Period for this Revolution to begin, 1700. Beverly fix'd 1697 for it.

last learn, that 'tis not for them to know the Times and the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own Power; and what he hath so done, can be no part of our Duty to know, or to enquire after. Why should not we then look upon the involved and mysterious Prophecies, relating to that Grand Revolution of the World, to be beyond the reach of our most improved Capacity to unfold; and for that Reason among others, principally intended by the Wisdom of God, not only to keep us within the bounds of Humility, by letting us know; how far Human Understanding might penetrate, with some grounds of Certainty; and where to give over it's farther Enquiry; but also from the Consideration of the Uncertainty and unscrutable Knowledge of that most Solemn Day, to excite us to a constant Watchfulness and Preparation for it? For the same reason God has conceal'd from Man the particular Day of his Death; which yet a Man is as much concern'd to know and prepare for, as all Mankind are for the Day of Universal Judgment. And yet the Divine Wisdom hath been pleased to leave Both equally unknown, and uncertain to us. And therefore we should set down contented with our Uncertainty in this Particular: The more, because our Lord's immediate Disciples themselves were entirely to seek in this Point. For, they generally apprehended, the Day of Judgment to be then at hand, and was immediately to follow the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; and yet by our Saviour's Answer to their Question put to him, (9) *what would be the Signe of his Coming, and of the End of the World*; it appears, he was not much concern'd to rectify them in

(9) *Matth. 24.*

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this Mistake. He had positively and peremptorily foretold his Coming, but had never fixt and determin'd the Time of it: Nay, so far from that, that he had plainly told them, that the precise time of the Day of Judgment, God had reserved as a Secret to himself, which he had not imparted to any, no not to the Angels of Heaven, nor to the Son of Man. Though he had given them as plain Signs of his Coming to Judgment upon *Jerusalem*, as the budding of the *Fig-tree* is a Sign of *Summer*; yet he could give them no such Signs of his Coming to judge the World. *For, of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels of Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.*

Here we see, that those are excluded from the Knowledge of the Last Day, who were most likely to know it, if God had not absolutely reserved it to himself. For, the Angels which are in Heaven, are Creatures of so perfect a Knowledge, because they are the immediate Ministers of God, continually attending upon him, and beholding his Face; that they understand much more of the Works of God, and his Providence in regard to the Affairs of the World, than we do, that live here below in so much Error and Ignorance; that dwell in Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in the Dust; that walk much in the Dark, having but little Light, besides what descends from above: Yet the particular time, when God will judge the World, he hath reserv'd as a Secret to himself, and not communicated it, so much as to the Angels, tho' they are designed to wait on the great Judge of the World, and to make up his Train in that Solemnity: As our Saviour tells us, speaking of his Advent at that Day,

(r) *The Son of Man*, says he, *shall come in his Glory, and all the Holy Angels with him.*

Now if the time of this Coming to Judgment be yet a Secret to those most knowing Creatures, who are the prime and immediate Attendants of God; that *behold his Face continually*, and are frequently let into the most intimate Counsels of Heaven; it follows hence, that there are some things conceal'd from them, which they cannot discover by the most contemplative and nearest Intuition of the Divine Essence, or glorious *Shechina*: An Argument by the way, against the Admirers and Promoters of a late Opinion, advanced by *Malebranche*, concerning the Ideal World, which is said (s) *to comprize in it all Ideas, and to be Exhibitive of them.* So that they who are admitted to this Vision, see all things in God, as the Representatives of them. And yet the Angels, who enjoy that Vision, where all things to come, as well as what are past, are actually present, can't discern there the set Time of the Day of Judgment, tho' it be prefixt, and the solemn proceeding upon that Day already declar'd. And if it be not yet visible or discovered in that most knowing and brightest State of things; how bold and groundless is the Notion of our Modern Philosophers, who talk of such an intimate Union betwixt God and the Soul of Man, and of God's being always so presential to our Minds; that even in this Life, by attending to him, we may see all things in this Ideal or Intellectual World, as in a Mirrour or a Glass, by the inward Light that displays it self from thence? How great a Presumption is it in others to determine, when the Day of Judgment shall be, when the Angels which are in Heaven are ignorant of it?

(r) Matt. 25. 23. (s) Nor, Theory of Id. World, part. I. p. 246.

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But this is not only hid from them, but which is yet much more, from the Son himself. This seems strange indeed, that the Son of God, who came from the Bosom of the Father, and therefore is more likely than any to know his Secrets; that he whom God had ordain'd to be the Judge of the World; into whose Hands he had committed this great Trust and Authority, should not be acquainted with the Time of this Judgment: Nay, that he, in whom are the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and in whom the Divinity does substantially reside, should not know this Time, this seems incredible, but that he himself hath told us so; and we have all the Reason in the World to take his Word for it. But here we must distinguish between his Humane Nature and Divine; tho' as God he could not be ignorant of any Thing, yet his Humane Understanding did not know it. For, 'tis not unreasonable to suppose, that the Divine Wisdom which dwelt in our Saviour, did communicate it self to his Human Soul according to his Pleasure; and so his Humane Nature might at some times not know some Things. This Supposition is supported by that Passage in St. Luke concerning our Saviour, (c) *And Jesus grew in Wisdom and Stature, or as the Word $\nu\lambda\iota\kappa\iota\alpha$ may more fitly be translated, in Age, and in Favour with God and Man.* Which seems to imply, that the Human Nature of Christ did not necessarily know all Things by Virtue of its Union with the Divinity; therefore, as Man, he is said to grow in Wisdom: In this Sense then, as he was Man in his Prophetick Office, he did not know the particular Time, which God had appointed for judging the World. And if he did not know it, 'tis surely no Reflection upon his

(c) Luke 2. 52.

his Disciples, if they were ignorant of it, or mistaken about it. Their Knowledge and Infallibility was only in Things that were revealed to them; but can't be imagined to extend to Things not reveal'd. If the Apostles, if the Angels of Heaven, if Christ himself, did not know the certain Time of the General Judgment; what Presumption is it in any Mortal breathing, to determine it; since our Saviour hath so expressly told us, that the Father hath reserved it as a Secret which he hath never communicated to any? And if they be mistaken in their Conjectures about it, 'tis no Wonder, because they have no Warrant from our Lord to ground such Conjectures upon. And if the Thing was not revealed to him, we have no Reason to believe, that it has been revealed to any Mortal since. Neither does it yet appear, that the End of the World is yet so near in View; because the Scripture-Predictions seem to intimate, that there shall be first a general Conversion of the *Jews*, and the (d) Coming in of the Fulness of the *Gentiles*. And this will be a Work, which in all Probability, will require many Years to compleat it in.

4. Their mighty Adventures in the *Cevennes* against the Arms of *France*, is another Thing they magnifie into a Miracle. By the surprizing Account they give of what happen'd there, one might expect to hear, they had done Wonders, and sufficiently aveng'd themselves of all their Enemies. But the Account is so inconsistent with Matter of Fact, that however a Man might be dispos'd not to lessen the Glory of that Heroick People, we can't but wonder at the Confidence of these Men, who tell us of their killing thou-

(d) *Rom.* 11. 25.

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hundreds of the Enemies best Regular Troops in one Day, without losing one Man on their side in the Field of Battle; when 'tis notoriously known, that the Operations of all their Campaigns fell much short of those glorious Achievements, which attended the Arms of some of the Antient Assertors of their Country's Liberty, or even the Bravery of the *Inskilling-Men* in Ireland; who in the Year 1689, with half their Numbers, not only made a Stand, but gain'd Ground upon near twice the Number of Forces, which these Champions own that ever themselves were attack'd by. And yet those Noble Actions of the One, which prov'd such effectual Means to preserve their Liberty and their Country, laid Claim to no Supernatural Agency, nor were ascrib'd to any higher Power than that of Man, assisted by a special Providence; whilst the assuming Pretensions of the Other terminated in the entire Ruin of both.

But let us more particularly examine Matters as they relate them. (e) " A little before I receiv'd a Command to take up Arms, says *Marrion*, I dreamed, that I saw in a Garden great black Oxen, very fat, that browsed upon the Plants in the Garden; one bade me drive away those Cattle, but I refused to do it; however the same Person being urgent with me to do so, I drove them out; I receiv'd Inspiration soon after, which said, that the Garden was an Emblem of the Church; that the great black Oxen were the Priests which laid it waste, and I should have a Call to drive away that sort of Cattle. Few Days after, the Spirit

" it gave me Notice to prepare to take up
 " Arms. This Inspiration was followed by some
 " of the like kind. When the War was begun,
 " the Inspiration chose our Officers, and taught
 " the Discipline of War, and enabled us to per-
 " form most gloriously. God damp't the Force
 " of Musket-Balls; they dropt harmless from
 " those to whom Providence would be a Shield:
 " And whenever we met with Disgrace, it was
 " either for not punctually observing the Orders
 " of the Inspirations, or when an Enterprize was
 " undertaken without them.

This Account containing several Particulars, we will consider them distinctly.

I. *Marion* and others receiv'd positive and re-
 peated Command from the Spirit to take up
 Arms. The Enterprize they were to go upon,
 and commanded to accomplish, was the expelling
 the black Oxen, the Priests, out of the Church,
 and deliver themselves from the Oppression they
 labour'd under by their means. Pursuant to this,
 the War was proclaim'd. But did the Effect
 prove correspondent to the Visions? Were the
 Priests driven out? Or did the Visionary Com-
 mission delude Men from their Repose, to hasten
 the Accomplishment of their own Ruine? Is it
 to be imagin'd, that God Almighty would have
 given express Order to any People, and not have
 assisted them in the Execution of that Order; but
 leave them to sink and perish in the Attempt?
 What Blasphemous Reflection is this on the Wis-
 dom, Veracity and Power of God, who never
 enjoins us any Thing, but what he graciously
 offers the Assistance of his Spirit, to enable us
 effectually to the performing of it? That severe
 Rebuke in *Ezekiel* is denounced against such Pre-
 tenders as these. (f) *wo unto the foolish Prophets of*
Israel,

(f) *Ezek. 13. 1, &c.*

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Israel, that prophesie out of their own Hearts, and follow their own Spirit. That have seen Vanity and lying Divination, saying, the Lord saith, and the Lord hath not sent them, nor spoken unto them. And they have made others to hope, that they would confirm the Word. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, because ye have spoken Vanity, and seen Lies, therefore behold, I am against you. And mine Hand shall be upon the Prophets: They shall not be in the Assembly of my People, neither shall they be written in the Writings of the House of Israel, neither shall they enter into the Land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. How truly this is verifi'd upon them, I leave to the Reader to judge. When God was pleased to visit the People of Israel in the Land of their Captivity, with what an high Hand did he effect their Deliverance? And that under far more unlikely Circumstances, than these were in? For Moses was not in a Condition above that of a Shepherd to the Priest of Midian; and the Israelites bred in Brick-kilns and Ignorance, under one of the most formidable Potentates on Earth. And for so meek and mean a Person to demand the Liberty of the Egyptian Slaves, was a most presumptuous Adventure, specially considering what a Slur and Contempt he had some Years before, cast upon the Royal Diadem of Egypt; for which he had been banish'd the Court, and soon after for smiting an Egyptian Aggressor, out-law'd the Country. But notwithstanding all Hazards and Improbabilities of doing any good, he was sent with a Demand of what, to be sure, Pharoah's Heart could not bear to hear of parting with; till he was forced by miraculous Signs and the sorest Judgments to open the Iron Furnace, and set the People free: Over whom, God's extraordinary Providence never with-drew his visible Care and Protection, making all Oppositions to fall before them, and even the Walls of Jericho, to give way at the sounding of Rams-Horns, till he had

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settled them in the Land which he had promis'd their fore-Fathers, that he would give unto them. As for those Powers, that so long oppress'd his People; they were all overwhelm'd in the Red Sea, which had but just before open'd a Passage for these to march thorough. Thus by one Almighty Stroke of his Providence, where God is pleas'd to declare himself immediately concern'd in the Cause, he protects his People and destroys their Enemies. (g) *He sent Moses his Servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. And he brought forth his People with Joy and his Chosen with Gladness.*

Now according to the preliminary Relation given in the present Case, the like wonderful Blessing and Conduct might have been expected; and that for these two Reasons.

First, Because, if God's Dealings with the Jewish Nation, be a true Pattern or Plan of his Proceedings with his People in future Ages, as has been observ'd by all Learned Interpreters. And if for that purpose he ordered, that all the great Strokes, both of their Departure from God, or their Return to him; and likewise both of the good and bad Fortune, that did at any Time befall that Nation, should be faithfully registred, and the true Causes of them faithfully assigned; that all Mankind from thence receive Instruction how they ought to behave themselves towards God; and what according to their different Behaviours they were to expect. Then it follows, that either these People were in the right, and so prosper'd; or were in the wrong and deceiv'd, and so suffer'd for it. This seems to be the Inference, if it be true, that the State, Condition and For-

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Fortune of all Kingdoms and Publick Bodies, is the same with that of the *Jews*, as 'tis represented by *Achior* the *Ammonite*, in the Advice he gave to *Holofernes*; which then prov'd true in Fact.

Secondly, If God's Dispensations and Providences, to Nations and Communities of Men, do always proceed (according to another Rule observ'd by Interpreters) upon one immutable Foundation, which has been, and ever will be the same in all Ages and Countries, Namely, the Expression and Vindication of his Justice and Goodness in this World: Then a Righteous and Religious People, in an honest Cause, may expect to succeed and prosper. But if a People be either wicked or led off by a Spirit of Delusion, let the Cause be never so just, they have no Reason to think that God should support them in it; but on the other side, that they should be punish'd for their Presumption, either by severe Judgments, or by a total Destruction. For tho' particular Persons who are in their Natures made to live for ever, may be rewarded or punish'd for their Works at any Time hereafter, which is enough to vindicate God's Justice with Relation to them; yet the Consideration of publick Societies and Nations, is quite different. They as Societies are not made to be immortal, but end with this World; and consequently can't be called to a future Account. But all the Rewards and Punishments, they are capable of as Societies, must be adjudged and distributed to them in this present Life. And if so, then 'tis to be wish'd, there were no Grounds to say, that it has happen'd to them according to their Works, or Pretensions.

For where is the Success and Deliverance these Visionary Leaders talk off? Were not the poor Protestants whom they allur'd into the Field, left a Prey to their Enemies, crush'd under those Arms,

sons, which they were made believe, would assert their Liberty? And instead of the Prophets driving out the Priests, according the Prophetic Dream and Vision, were not they themselves driven out? What can be a plainer Sign and Demonstration of a false Prophet, than this? For, This was the very sign, by which the four hundred Prophets of *Israel* were discover'd to be false Prophets, who had perswaded *Ahab* to go up against *Ramoth-Gilead*, assuring him, that he should prosper; and that the Lord would deliver the City into the Hand of the King. But he paid dear for that Experiment, because he harkned to the Advice of those Seducers; it cost him his Life, and doubtless the Lives of many Thousands in *Israel* besides (b).

But the Miscarriage of these latter Prophets, (I do not know, whether I should not call it, as appears by the sequel,) Perfidiousness, is one while charg'd on the Disproportion of Human Force, and the Inequality of other Means; without Remembering what was pretended elsewhere. If their Party, as they gave out, were under the immediate Direction and Support of the Mighty Arm and Counsel of Heaven, they must needs be the stronger side; and no Numbers or Weapon form'd against them, could have been able to Face, or prevail over them. For as *Jonathan* well observes; (i) *There is no Restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few.* (k) *Gideon's* Handful of Men, on purpose reduced from 32000 to a tenth part, defeated the united Host of *Midian*, nay one man, divinely assisted, shall chase a Thousand. (l) So *Sampson* by a single Hand slew a Thousand *Philistines*.

And

(b) 1 Kings 22. 6. (i) 1 Sam. 14. 6. (k) Judg. 7.
(l) Joshua 23. 10. Judg. 15. 15.

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And had this Army of Prophets; as they are stiled, how few soever their Troops, been supported by such irresistible and invincible Strength, and the Force of Musket-balls damp'd by the Interception of an invisible Power; what could have been too difficult for them to atchieve, or of Force sufficient to oppose or hurt those, whose Heads were thus cover'd in the Day of Battle? But how shamefully is the Pretension here baffled and confounded? Yet *Marion* hath found out an Evasion to cover his Flight: He protests, that whenever they met with Disgrace, it was either for not punctually observing the Order which their Inspirations gave them, or when an Enterprize was undertaken without them.

'Tis strange, that Men should be immediately and sensibly directed by the Spirit, and not govern'd by his Direction! That his All-Commanding Conduct should carry them to Victories and Success; and yet they not wait his Order, but resist his Command! To be thus inspir'd, protected and victorious; and yet not always be obedient to the Heavenly Visions, when their All laid at the Stake, and they saw before their Eyes their Safety depending on their Obedience to them.

These and many the like Difficulties that occur, we must leave to them to reconcile, who have Skill and Assurance enough to tell the World, " (m) That the Events have always answer'd the Predictions, and every thing was fulfill'd, according to the Fore-advice given them from Heaven of it; an Argument by the way, that either they were deceiv'd by the Inspirations, and so

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were false Prophets, or else knew what they did, when they decoy'd so many Thousand poor Souls, and deliver'd them up into the Hands of their Enemies, making good Terms of Safety for themselves: So that the Blood of their Brethren lies upon their Heads, and will doubtless be requir'd at their Hands. This Dilemma let them get clear from, if they can, and satisfy the World one way or t' other. These are the principal and main Things, which they labour hard to have pass for Miracles. What their chief Converts in England pretend to have perform'd, I am not Concern'd to consider, the Imposture of them being already detected by other Hands. All these Performances falling short of the Character of Miracles, 'tis not worth while to pursue lesser Matters, especially considering they were acted on another Theatre, among their own Party; we do not hear, they have attempted to produce such Proofs of their Miracle-working-Power, since their setting up among us: Which gives just Grounds to suspect the Truth of them. For, if they were really true, why might not the same be done as well here? Nay, much rather in any other Country, than their own, and before other Spectators to gain them the Reputation of true Prophets: For how easy and convincing would it be for Men, who really had the Power of Miracles, to run upon Swords or sharp-pointed Knives, to stand in the middle of a Bonfire, without Hurt, in the open Streets; and before the most publick Concourse of People, as to perform those Things in a remote Place, and before a select Society, who, for ought we know, might be prepar'd to attest what was dictated to them.

But perhaps, 'tis not safe to venture on edged Tools, or Fiery Trials in the Sight of wary and incredulous Spectators, lest they should be so unhumane, as to thrust the Prophets further, than they

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they were willing to go, and hold them too long on that sort of Exercise. And yet for demanding such Signs, we are charg'd with the same Incredulity which the Jews were guilty of, " (m) who tho' they had been in a manner the " Center of true Prophecy, could not know Christ " and his Apostles, says *Marion* : As if the Scriptures from one End to the other, were full of Types and Prophecies concerning the Coming of these Missionaries; or their Doctrine as pure and heavenly, and their Miracles as great and unquestionable, as those which are recorded in the Bible; but we neither read, nor hear of any such Matters; and therefore, what other Reception can they be suppos'd to deserve, than what he does, who shall take upon him the Style and Character of an Ambassador, without any Credential Letters to give him Authority. Their Silence in this particular makes us the more cautious, and look upon them, as the Jugglings of *Mahomet*, or *George Fox*, the Quaker, who both gave out, they did Miracles; but when, and in whose Presence they were done, themselves only knew; or the the Pretension of the Roman Church, which has a vast Collection of Miracles in their Legend, but all done among themselves, and in their own Popish Countries. But they are most wanting, where there is most need of them, namely, for the Conversion of Heathens and the Conviction of Hereticks; yet for all this, we do not hear of any real Miracles wrought for these Purposes; nor can we prevail with them, to favour us with the Sight of one. All Pretenders this way keep their Miracles private, in Corners; tho' both Reason and Scripture tell us, that (n) Miracles were

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(m) *Mar. Ded.* p. 19. (n) 1 Cor. 14, 22.

not intended for them that believe; but to convince them that believe not: Therefore we read but of one Miracle that our Saviour wrought in private, which was (o) his Transfiguration on the Mount; the rest he did in the most publick manner; for he went about in quest of all Opportunités and Occasions for the doing of them, healing all that were diseased, and feeding Thousands of Persons at a Time by his Miracles; (p) which were they written every one, 'tis suppos'd, that even the World it self could not contain the Books that should be written. The like might be said of the Acts of the Apostles. But I hasten,

2. In the Second and Last Place, to consider the End and Purpose for which Miracles are wrought. This is a sure Test to try Miracles by, and to distinguish those which are real, and done by the Power of God, from those which are not so,

What is done to bad Purposes, is itself evil, and can't proceed from a good Principle; the Cause being known by it's Effect; if the Effect be evil, the Principle from whence it flows must be of the same Nature. Now the Use of Miracles, is only to introduce and give Credit and Authority to a Message or Ambassador extraordinary from God; but as the Case now stands with the Christian Church, where the Holy Scripture does fully answer all the Purposes of such Missions or Ambassies, to negotiate and transact all Matters between God and Mankind, that pertain to Life and Godliness: As there is no manner of Occasion for such extraordinary Messages, or Ambassadors,

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(o) Math. 17. 2. (p) John 20. ult.

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neither are such Credentials of any use. And as the Cessation or Silence of them for so many Hundred Years, is Matter of unquestionable Fact among those of the Reform'd Religion; whenever they are reviv'd, or trump'd up to attest a new Revelation; the Truth of them is very much to be suspected, and the Revelation which they are produc'd as an Evidence of, must be narrowly inspected, and scan'd with the strictest Scrutiny. We are sure, that the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles were real and done by a Divine Power; real, in that they were numberless, great, and publicly wrought in the Presence of multitudes, and for a long Time together; and that they were done by a Divine Power, is manifest, not only from the legible Characters of Divinity stamp'd upon them, being all the Effects of Goodness as well as Power; relieving the Necessities and easing the pains and Miseries of Human Nature; but because they were also done to confirm the Authority of a Doctrine every way worthy of God to be it's Author, and tending to the Universal Good and Happiness of Mankind. And whenever the like Miracles for Weight and Number, and for such Extraordinary Ends and Reasons are wrought again, we will not be faithless, but believing.

But, where the Doctrine is either absurd in itself, or contrary to Scripture, or pernicious to Christianity, which the Miracles are brought to confirm; those Miracles must be false, or from an evil Spirit: because we are certain, that God never employs his Power, to contradict himself, or the Eternal Rules of Reason. The Miracles then, that were pretended to be done by *Simon Magus*, could not be of God; because they were done to give Reputation to the lewd and senseless Doctrines of the Gnosticks. Of the same Nature must be those of the Roman Church; because the Doctrine

trine which they countenance is absurd, and contrary to the Doctrine of Scripture. For that Church applying these new Miracles, to confirm and establish their new Doctrines of *Purgatory, Indulgences, Invocation of Saints and Angels, and Transubstantiation*, which is incapable of being confirmed by a Miracle, because it overthrows the Certainty of Sense, of which a Miracle is an Object. Their Miracles, therefore, have been found, as fallacious as their Doctrines,

The pretended Miracles of the New Prophets bear no better, or more current Stamp, because they are brought to prove Revelations, which destroy the Authority of Holy Scripture in several particulars, as well as undermine the Usefulness of the whole. For, these Revelations have not only chang'd the Christian Priesthood, which is an essential Part of the Gospel-Covenant; but are also changing the Law of the civil Magistrate, and are for setting up Christ's Kingdom by Arms: For however they sometime declare their Dislike of this Notion, yet according to their own Confession, This was the very Thing they were contending for, in the *Cevennes*.; and *Marion's* Inspiration bids him still (q) prepare himself to "depart within a short Time out of this Country, "and go to his People to fight there more than "ever; where he shall see complete Victories. And Mr. *Lacy* talks, as if this Country was to be a Scene of new Settlement. (r) "I have chosen, *says he*, this Place for my Habitation for "my Glory, I will not that ye have any over you, "I will preside over you; I will make my Pleasure known to this People. I will make Judges

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(q) *Marion's* Prophetic Warning, p. 1, 5. (r) *Lacy's* Prophetic Warning, Pref. p. 11. Ditto p. 8, 18.

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as at the first, when Justice flowed down like
 " a Stream, I will make Courts of Justice know,
 " they hold of me *durante beneplacito*. In conse-
 quence of this, Himself is created King by an
 immediate Order of the Spirit; besides that in
 Heaven an Earthly Crown awaits him. They say,
 'tis usual for a Man, who runs mad out of Pride,
 to call himself God Almighty, and sometimes Mo-
 narch of the Universe: However that may be, I am
 sure, This is not only without Precedent, but directly
 contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Saviour
 and the Apostles, who constantly declar'd their
 Kingdom was not of this World, and so left the Civil
 Magistrate in Possession, and asserting his Right,
 and requiring Submission to it.

Supposing then (what does not yet plainly ap-
 pear) that some wonderful Things were done by
 these Men, to favour these Suggestions. The
 very Suggestions themselves being repugnant to
 the Scripture Revelations and Civil Government,
 are an Argument, that these Things are not done
 by the Power of God: Because, there is no Dis-
 pute, but the Scriptures are of God, and the Ci-
 vil Magistrate his Ordinance; (s) so that what-
 ever opposes the just and lawful Authority of
 the one, or advances Doctrines repugnant to the
 other, can't possibly be from him.

It is not impossible, but Wonders may be
 wrought by another Power, as may be fairly
 concluded from the Caution which the Scripture
 gives us concerning them, when done by false
 Prophets: Tho' in other Cases they are made
 a Sign of a true Prophet. Why should it be
 thought incredible, that God should permit the
 Devil

(s) Rom. 13. 1.

Devil to do several strange and Extraordinary things in the Heathen Temples and Oracles, where Miracles were pretended, tho' it is certain, that there was a great deal of Imposture mixt with them? For Moses takes notice, that false Prophets might work Miracles and provides against it when it should happen. (r) *If there arise among you a Prophet, and gives thee a Sign or a Wonder, And the Sign or the Wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying let us go after other Gods and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto that Prophet. And he gives the Reason of this; because, he hath spoken unto you to turn you away from the Lord your God, that is to say, from the Worship of the true God. And by way of the like Caution our Saviour tells us, (u) That false Prophets should not only come in Sheep's Cloathing that is, in the most disguised and deceivable Form of Sanctity and Innocence, who should deceive, if it were possible the very Elect; so strong and prevailing would be the Delusion: But that they should also shew Signs and wonders. The same is confirm'd by the Apostle, who says, that (w) the Man of Sin should come after the Working of Satan, with Power, and lying Wonders; that is, should work Miracles to gain Credit to his false and impious Doctrines.*

Some false Prophets have gone so far in this Account, that they took upon them to discover the Thoughts and Designs of other People, however remote, future and contingent. (x) *Julius Caesar was warn'd by Spurina, the Augur, of his Danger such a Day, if he went into the Senate: Which accordingly happen'd. And at the*

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(r) Deut. 13 1, &c. (u) Math. 7. 15. Mar. 13. 22.
 (w) 2 Thess. 2. (x) Suet. in Jul. c. 11.

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same time, that *Domitian* was killed at *Rome*, *Apollonius Thyaneus* stopt in the middle of his Speech, which he was making to the People of *Ephesus*, and cried out, *Strike the Tyrants*, and the like; adding, that *Domitian* was kill'd. The Truth whereof agreeing with the Certainty of the Fact, won him the Reputation of a Prophet.

But these, and the like Predictions and Discoveries, were no way difficult to the Dæmon, when he had been present at the Debates, and principally influenc'd the Resolutions of the Conspirators.

As to his Predictions of more remote Contingencies, they were always full of Uncertainties and Ambiguities, mere Conjectures from Appearances, and the Tendencies of Agents, or the Reasons of Things, from which, any Man may, without the Spirit of Prophecy, give a shrewd Guess, and foretell what may, in great Likelihood, come to pass. In such a Case, who has not been a Prophet? But yet this is far enough from constituting One a real Prophet.

And whenever God permits Miracles to be done by the Devil, or his Prophets, (whether they do work any Alteration in the Matter, or only deceive the Sight, 'tis all one to those who are to judge, if they have no way to discover, or prevent such a Delusion of their Senses) when God, I say, permits such to be done, the Scripture acquaints us, for what reason he does it; which is, for the Trial of the Good. (2) *For the Lord your God proves you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your Hearts: And*
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for the hardening of the Wicked, by his just Judgment; " Because they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved. For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a Lye; that they might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness.

But such Imputation (it may be said) can't justly be charg'd upon these Extraordinary Missionaries, and their chief Followers; because, for many Years past, they have maintain'd a very fair and undoubted Reputation for Religion and Learning. And therefore, that God should deliver them up to so horrid a Delusion, is not only inconsistent with the Justice and Goodness of the Divine Economy, but repugnant to our Saviour's Promise, " (1) If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God.

'Tis true, the best way to understand any Doctrine, with the Tendency of it, whether it be of God or not, is to do the Will of God: This disposes Men to the Knowledge of Divine Truths, and the Reception of God's Grace. This was what our Saviour desired to find among the Jews, in order to the convincing of them, that he was the True Prophet; " If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self; that is, if a Man be willing to do, and believe whatsoever shall appear to be the Will of God, and so not prejudic'd against the Truth by his Lusts, such a One will easily be convinced, " that my Doctrine is of God. This certainly held in the Case of our Saviour

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Saviour; The Nature and Tendency of whose Doctrine and Miracles visibly bore the Characters of Divine Authority, and could not be excepted against by any Unprejudic'd well-disposed Person. But what are offer'd by these Prophets carry a wide Difference, as appear'd above.

This Rule is not without it's Exception, and Distinction too.

For, tho' Religion and Learning are the best Preservatives, under the Grace of God, against Error; yet are they no such Guard and Security, as set a Man beyond the Danger of it. Nay, the more eminent any Man is for these good Qualities, the more liable to Satan's Attempts; against such, that politick Enemy lays the most close Siege, draws up all his Artillery, and levels all his Batteries, as well knowing, like a skilful General, who will always lye down before the Place of greatest Consequence, that upon the taking of it, the rest of the Country may fall in of Course; the fall of one pious and good Man, especially if he be of considerable Note, for Learning and Fortune too, will shake many more, and may like a Blazing Comet sweep away a whole Region of lesser Stars after it. Of this Character, were generally the Founders of new Sects, both Ancient and Modern. So that the more Exemplarily Pious, Learned or Great a Man is, the more it concerns him, to be ware of the Devil; and not take himself secure on this side Heaven from his Temptations. That good Men may fall from a state of Grace, should be Matter of greater Care and Watchfulness to them, according to that of the Apostle, (a) *He that thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall.*

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(a) 1 Cor. 10. 12.

The Best are but Men, and as such, subject to mistake; their Mistakes then should be less surprizing to others, whom I would address in the Words of another Apostle; (b) *Ye therefore Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own stedfastness; but grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Great Caution ought to be used, particularly by Men of Learning and Parts, that an insatiable Desire of enlarging their Knowledge, and a pressing Curiosity of making new Discoveries in Religion, do not carry them beyond their Depth, or turn their Heads into Enthusiasm, to which none so obnoxious, as the Learned, and the Inquisitive.

The great Ick of knowing Things above our reach, was that which ruin'd our First Parents, and hath given the greatest Advantage to the Devil against us ever since. For, when Men grew extremely desirous of knowing Things hidden or future, he soon found out many Inventions, either to satisfy, or deceive them.

From hence, came the Oracles, and the many Methods of Divination, and the consulting of Spirits, which were all adapted to that unquenchable Thirst Men had, of knowing what God thought fit to conceal from them. And tho' by many Instances, they could not, but discover the Tricks and Cheats which the Devil put upon them, yet the Work went on, and so it will still, as long as there are Men willing to be abus'd.

Lucifer

So strangely does this Curiosity bewitch and infatuate Men, and lay them open to all the Impostures and Delusions of Evil Spirits, who can't be better pleas'd, than when they see the Folly of Men, in thinking more highly, than they ought to think, and in reaching above their Height, to gratify a vain and impetuous Humour. Let the Learned beware of this.

In the Character also of those who often pass for good Men, a great Distinction is to be made. For, 'tis to be fear'd, there are too many close Hypocrites in the World, that under a more than ordinary Ostentation and Shew of Sanctity, do secretly indulge themselves in the Sin, either of *Lucifer*, or *Simon Magus*, *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, or some other base Lust; or on some dislike of what is Written, or Curiosity of finding a new Key to it, let their Minds run upon prophetick Schemes, or a Set of new Principles and strange Notions. For, there are Spiritual Sins, as well as Carnal; which are, at least, equally destructive of true Religion.

In these Cases, no wonder, if God give Men up to strange Delusions, and suffer them to fancy, that what the Heat of their Imaginations suggests, is the Effect of Divine Inspiration. It ought not to be strange to us, if such Persons bring their Understanding to their Will and Interest, and bend their Judgment to their Prejudices, and blindly follow the sway of their own Affection, because they would have it so: And then let them go ever so far the wrong Way, they will still believe themselves in the right, and all other Men in the wrong. How much these Enthusiasts might be influenc'd by the Premises, I will not determin; tho' the Conclusion seems evident, from the distinguishing Mark, they give themselves, as being

being the only People, that are to be saved; and the severe Judgment they pronounce upon all others, who, as Unbelievers and Reprobates, are to be condemn'd and perish with the wicked World.

An harsh Sentence! enough to spoil the Grace and Excellency of even inspired Gifts and Miracles, where Men are really endued with them, and render them entirely vain and unprofitable to the Inspired themselves; If we allow St. Paul to be Judge: Because they want that Charity which is the more excellent Way, and which is better and more acceptable to God, than all Miraculous Gifts.

After the Apostle had reckon'd up the several extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, he advises the *Corinthians* to covet earnestly the best Gift, and tells them of something, which he had to recommend, better even than that; and 'tis the Spirit of Love; without which, we are nothing worth. Tho' a Man, says he, should be able (c) to speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels; had the Gift of all Languages, and could discourse with the greatest Eloquence, yet without this Charity, He would be but (d) as sounding Brass, or a ringing Cymbal; tho' he had the Gift of Prophecy, and could foretell Things to come, and understood all Mysteries; had all Knowledge and all Faith, and such a Faculty, as could work Miracles, remove Mountains, and convert others to the Faith; yet, without this Frame and Temper of Spirit, this Affection of sincere Love and diffusive Charity, it would profit him nothing. This is St. Paul's Opinion, and 'tis agreed, he had the Spirit.

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(c) 1 Cor. 13. 1. (d) Ibid.

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Consonant to this, are those Words of our Saviour, who is to be our Judge, and from whose Mouth, we shall certainly hear the same again at the Day of Judgment, (e) *Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works: And yet these very Persons, for all this, may be but Workers of Iniquity, and such as our Lord will bid to depart from him.*

Since then, that Charity is the Distinguishing Badge of the best Religion, which every Man must put on, that would have his Virtuous Actions accepted with God: What does hence follow, but that we earnestly Cover, and Industriously endeavour after this most Heavenly Gift; form and modulate our Tempers and Principles by this Rule; conscientiously and sincerely put it in practice, both among our selves, and towards all Men, according to it's diffusive Nature, which is boundless. Then we need not be terrified by the bold and uncharitable Pretensions of Men. (f) *For by This shall all Men know, that we are Christ's Disciples, and belong to him; if we have love one to another.* This sets us beyond the reach of hard-mouth Censures, or Judiciary Denunciations.

If our Faith be directed by that Rule of Holy Scripture, and our Lives govern'd by it's Precepts; what Reason can there be, why we should be mov'd, any more, than St. Paul was, by the proud Boasting and Confidence of the like false Prophets in his Time: For, they do now no more, than they did then, give any real Proof and Demonstration, that

(e) Matth. 7. 22. (f) John 1. 3. 35.

that upon the Strictest Enquiry and Examination we can find, of their being sent from God. And when Christ shall come to (g) judge the World according to this Gospel, as St. Paul assures us he will, and not according to any other Revelation, we may Reasonably hope to receive that Commendation, which he once gave the Church of *Ephesus*; (b) because she had, as we now have, tried them, which said they were Apostles, but were not, and found them Liers.

Having thus taken the Freedom, Sir, to deliver you, my thoughts on this occasion, I leave the whole matter with you, seriously to consider, what Use, Prophaness and Infidelity make of this Delusion, and on whose Heads the Judgment will light, for being accessary to it. That God would undeceive the Deluded, restore them to a better Mind, and give you a right Understanding in all things, is the hearty Prayer of,

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When I came to Town, soon after, I found, there was a Report handed about, that Mr. *Emes* was buried; and his Resurrection put off for a longer Time, that when it should happen, it might be a more convincing Miracle to Mankind. In the mean-while, that our Expectation might still be kept up, notwithstanding the late Disappointment (there is nothing like keeping Men in Heart,

tho' the Wise Man says, *Hope deferred maketh the Heart sick*) a Story of another Miracle is set on foot; that One Mr. Byworth, a Victualler, in Ormond-street, who had been a Cripple many Years, was now restor'd to the Use of his Limbs, by the Hands of the Prophets.

The other of the Divines before mentioned, resolving to inform himself more perfectly of the certainty of the Fact, immediately repairs to the Party; who upon enquiry told him, Two of the Prophets had given him a Visit and askt, if he had Faith to be cur'd of his Lameness, and did believe, they could effect it? His Answer was, He believ'd that God Almighty could heal him, by what Hands or Means He pleas'd to assign; And if He had given them such a Power, he did not question their Ability and Performance. Here was Faith enough to receive the Blessing from the Hand that had it to confer. Upon this, they took him up under the Arms, and leading him into the middle of the Room, said some Prayers over him; and then quitting their Holds, bid him stand upon his Feet and walk; which no sooner done, but down he dropt: The second Trial had no better Success.

With this Relation the Clergyman steps to the Coffee-house, which his Friend Mr. Lacy us'd, and publickly charg'd him with the Forgery; at which the Prophet seem'd not a little startled, and being for some time quite lost in his Thoughts for a Reply, at length bolts out a Prophecy of raising the Dead in few Months.

After this, *That by the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Word of this Account might be established*, I got two Gentlemen to discourse the Impotent Man, who since remitted the following Confirmation.

S I R,

“ I N Conference with Mr. Byworth, He told me,
“ that the Prophets, Two or Three at a Time,
“ were

“ were at his House, three or four times within
 “ this Month, to try Experiment, sometimes lift-
 “ ing him up in their Arms, and bidding him stand
 “ upon his Legs, sometimes were silent, Quaker-
 “ like, saying they had not then the Spirit. But
 “ he still continues as lame as before: By which he
 “ is now convinc’d, that they can do no more, than
 “ other Men. This is all he desir’d me to acquaint
 “ you with, besides his Service, by Yours, &c.

January 18. 1707

J. G.

S I R,

“ I Have been with Mr. *James Eyworth*, and find,
 “ there is now something of an Understand-
 “ ing between him and the Prophets; which has
 “ rendred him very shy of relating any thing that
 “ may any way look ill of them; ’tis at present but
 “ low with him, having wasted most of his Sub-
 “ stance in seeking for Cure; therefore, the less
 “ Wonder, that what often blinds the Eyes of o-
 “ thers, should stop his Mouth: However, upon
 “ warming the Man, Nature recover’d it self, and
 “ by that means, I, at last, pumpt the Truth out of
 “ him; viz. that Sir *Richard Bulkeley*, Esq; *Lacy*, and
 “ others of that Clan, had been frequently tam-
 “ pering with him, but could not as yet strain him
 “ up to their point. They assur’d him, that Esq;
 “ *Lacy* had the Power of Healing, but the Knight
 “ had only the Promise, which, in short time, he
 “ expected to be made good. Esq; *Lacy* told him,
 “ that Mr. *Emes*, lately deceas’d, is to be rais’d from
 “ the Dead the 25th of May next. Here Mr. *Py-*
 “ *worth* askt the Prophet, what manner of Body he
 “ should arise with? His Answer was, that his Body
 “ should be like *Adam’s* Body, and the Grave should
 “ not be open’d, but he should rise out of the Grave
 “ half way, and Mr. *Lacy* is to lend him his Hand, to
 “ lift him up; then he should walk Home naked, and
 “ not be asham’d of his Nakedness: As for those who
 “ laught him to scorn, they should drop down dead;

" but himself should live to be the Wonder of the
 " World to all Mankind. I am yours, &c.

January 24. 1707.

W. H.

These Relations being so full, and so particular, Reflections would be needless.

Those whose Misfortune 'tis to be fallen under the Power of this strong Delusion, and are not to be convinc'd by Demonstration, I would refer to a Prophet of their own; who, after he had been working two remarkable Miracles on the Body of a Female Convert, viz: Curing *Elizabeth Gray* of Blindness, and saving her from suffocation, in his Vindication against a certain Book, directed him by the Spirit, and printed before the last Part of his Warnings; entirely gives up the Authority them, and all other Miracles pretended by that Society, in these Words; *(a) If within six Months now to come, the Mighty Power of God does not attest, they (these Prophetick Denunciations) were from him. I shall before all the World acknowledge my Delusion.*

I would ask this Gentleman a sober Question or two; does he verily believe himself, he ever did work a true Miracle? If he believes he did not, as is here implied; why does he shuffle with the World? Let him be so fair and honest, as own it without Jesuitical Equivocation; so the Dispute about Miracles will be at an end. If he asserts, that those were true Miracles which are said to have been done by him; pray, by what Power did he do them? Was it by a Power deriv'd from God, or from the Devil; no other Power that we know of, can Work Miracles? If by the former; why does he then say, *If within six Months, the Mighty Power of God does not appear to attest; as if that Power had not appear'd in those Miracles?* If he perform'd them by the latter; we will not so much as question the Truth of them; he shall have both the Honour and Credit of them. Adieu.

F I N I S.

(a) Vind. Pag. ult.

